

FREE! FAST-PLAY ADVENTURE GAME ⚡ EPISODE I FICTION

STAR
WARS®

Gamer

ON STAR WARS GAMING

ISSUE NUMBER 2

- Pilots
- Pirates
- Privateers

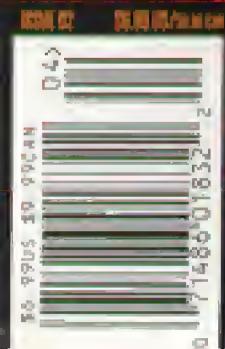
Star
Pioneers:
The Duros

Maximum Hyperdrive

- 3 PS 2 Starfighters
- 12 Custom Freighters
- 60 Smuggler's Secrets

EXCLUSIVE!

LucasArts Games Sneak Peek





ON THE COVER

The Sunshine State's Doug Alexander Gregory (a guy so talented they had to give him three names) brings a designer's eye to three of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*'s iconic heroes: the Jedi Guardian, Dorn Tavers; the Rodian Fringer, Kelko; and the sly Noble, Arani Korden. Catch Arani in action in the *Fast Play Game* on page 50.

STAR WARS® Gamer

THE FORCE IN STAR WARS GAMING

VOLUME I, NUMBER 2

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Force

THE GAMING
UNIVERSE

TECHNICAL
DATA

ALIEN
HORIZONS

ALTERNATE
DIMENSIONS



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My friend, Monte Cook, big-name game designer down in Wizards of the Coast's R&D, kidded me when I called it "Skywalker Ranch."

"If you were really one of the cool kids, you'd just call it 'the Ranch,'" he said.

"Well, if I just said that," I countered, "then I wasn't sure you uncool people would know what I was talking about."

We joke, my friends and I,

So Chris Perkins, Kyle Hunter and I went to the Ranch in November. (Some other people went too, but we were the cool kids) to talk about the direction for *Star Wars Gamer* and our new sister publication, *Star Wars Insider* (on sale soon).

Holy cow, is that place cool. All the architecture is fabulous. The library is every bit as cool as you've heard. They told us that there's a working ranch on the premises. They even have deer and quail (or some unobtrusive fowl) wandering loose. Iain Morris, Lucas Licensing Art Editor, told us that the hills around the Ranch would strangely remind us of Naboo. He's right.

We also got to meet a bunch of people we normally only write emails to, like Iain, and also Ben Harper, Lucy Wilson, and Steve Sansweet—all good people. Chris even got to sit next to George at lunch one day. Oh yeah, and they're working on Episode II.

Episode II is on everyone's minds there. Out in the rest of the world, Ep II is still a year and a half away. There, it's happening RIGHT NOW. And I gotta tell you, it's pretty cool. Some lucky Chris Perkinses who shall remain nameless get to read the script (not that I'm jealous or anything). Me, I just got a fast and loose presentation from Lucasfilm sources about the movie's contents. Of course, even what little I know I can't tell you... except maybe this: It's gonna be good. It has game potential out the proverbial wazoo.

New places to go, new people to interact with, new ideas that are nearly game-ready out of the box. Remember that "new, new, new" speech I gave last issue? You are so gonna get it. And you're going to get it from us. You're gonna be one of the cool kids.

—JEFF

Jeff Quick, Senior Editor



The Really Cool Kids

(From left to right)
Iain Morris, Ben Harper,
Kyle Hunter, and
Jeff Quick take time out
for a photo.

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FORCE FEEDBACK

"I felt a great disturbance in the Force... as if millions of voices suddenly cried out..."



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Anybody Out There?

Send Us a Transmission
from Your Corner of the Galaxy

It's the same old story in the publishing biz. You try to run a jazzy letters column, but for the first couple of issues you put out, no one knows to write to you yet. Luckily, some kind people foresaw the problem and wrote to us anyway. Here they are now!

An Idea Man

Howdy Folks!

After picking up the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* this week (and playing in the first session of a new campaign), eagerly awaiting the first issue of *Star Wars Gamer* mag. Thought I'd email some general thoughts.

I'd like to see the new RPG take front and center stage for the magazine. I'm not sure why there would be continued interest in the adventure game, which serves primarily as a lead-in to the more robust RPG core. While I understand that you'll be covering computer and console games as well, I'd like to see those items minimized. Same for the CCG, which I have no interest in, but again understand that it has a place in a

Star Wars game magazine. No interest at all in non-gaming *STAR WARS* items, such as toys, action figures, merchandise, etc. Original fiction would be fine; previews of novels I'm "eh" on.

I do like the idea of a Dark Horse comic strip or serialization. I find their material to be of excellent quality. Our GM, in fact, used the plotline from Dark Horse Comics' Jedi Council series as backdrop to our campaign, providing a handy hook as for sending three Padawans off on their own. I've got a stack of the recent *STAR WARS* comics they produce (from the Episode I era) and, given our new campaign is set in that timeline, find it an excellent resource. I noticed, by the way, the article for issue 1 on adaption of Marvel Comics aliens for the game; I'd be highly interested in adaptions of the Dark Horse Comics—both aliens and NPCs.

Well, enough rambling on my part. Thanks for the opportunity to sound off!

Brian Isikoff
via Internet

No, thank you, Brian, for contributing to the small, but ever-growing body of reader feedback for *Star Wars Gamer*. We like to think that we're not simply the publishing arm of a supranational corporate media conglomerate, but that we're the friendly publishing arm of a supranational corporate media conglomerate, here to serve you.

You'll probably see RPG content take the front-and-center position as requested, Brian. But our goal here is to cover *STAR WARS* games in all their incarnations. Rather than asking us to minimize our coverage of non-RPG games, perhaps you could take this opportunity to broaden your gaming horizons. After all, there's a world of gaming fun awaiting every single *STAR WARS* fan who ever lived. All of them. How can you deny coverage of games that might appeal to them? That's what I thought. I knew you'd come around to our way of thinking, Brian. See? That's why we're the friendly arm.



Oh, and it's a pretty safe bet to expect to see Dark Horse material turn up here eventually. We like comics here at *Star Wars Gamer*. We like them very much.



Say Chiss!

Dear *Gamer*,

I just went out and bought my copy of *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* and was happy to see all the content it came with. I am, though, hoping to see stats for the Chiss, Grand Admiral Thrawn's race.

I would like it if you would put it in your first or second mag.

Thanks!

Aaron D. Hurt
via Internet

You're welcome, Aaron. The answer to your request is "no." But how about if we put it in our fifth mag?



A Gearhead Speaks

Hello there,

I am writing in regards to an idea I had about the magazine and the Core Rules book that recently hit the shelves.

While I reviewed the book, I came to the conclusion that the few ships they had in the book were definitely not enough for a start. They can basically get things done as far as playing a Naboo game or an X-wing game, but there are hardly any ships in the book for solo starfighting. Further, there is no way to understand how to customize a starfighter either.

Here is what I was thinking about mainly: Is it possible to create a point system to create spacecraft? Basically supplying like maybe ten or so chassis for ships of each class of vessel, and a set number of space points for each chassis and then have things like extra armor, shields, inertial compensators, and the like to take up space in the chassis so that a person can truly customize a star craft for their characters.

If this idea interests you, feel free to use it. I'd like to see some standard for the customizing of a space craft for this game, that way it could become a real masterpiece.

Sincerely,
Donald J. Kiesling II
via Internet

It's Your Universe

That was the message as the doors opened up at Planet Hollywood in Seattle on Saturday, November 11, as the World Premier of the new *Star Wars* RPG was unveiled. Attending the event was Jake Lloyd (Anakin Skywalker), Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca), Drew Struzan (Core RPG Cover artist) and Adam Hughes (Invader of *Obi-Wan* cover artist).

More than 700 people came to see the new *Star Wars* RPG. One couple came all the way from Detroit to attend the event. At the main stage, the stars spent the day greeting and

signing for the crowds. People stood in lines to play the *Star Wars Invasion of Theed Adventure Game*. The Roleplaying Game Association (RPGA) was busy answering questions about their organized play game called *The Living Force*. Bill Slavicek and his team spent the day answering questions about the game and the D20 System. Artist Mark Price gave up his weekend to do caricatures. The *Star Wars Gamer* staff was on hand too, giving away free previews of their first issue.

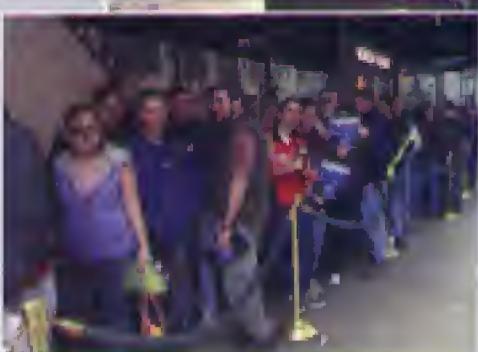
The most asked question of the day: "When can I get my hands on that book?" We hope you know by now. ■



Left (l to r) Drew Struzan, Peter Mayhew and Jake Lloyd play the new *Star Wars* RPG. Will Jake's character turn to the dark side?

Lower left: Fans waited in the chilly line for hours outside Planet Hollywood.

Below: Daniel Kaufman GMs a lightsaber battle with eager players.



Donald, you can't help but be overjoyed at this issue, which contains a whole hangar full of new ships for your campaign's heroes and villains. Flip immediately to page 36 and begin the enjoyment.

This article actually came to us reversed from our standard way of receiving articles: art first. Artist Jeff Carlisle sent us a dozen ship designs and asked if we were interested in using them. We thought for about four seconds before we said, "yes." But then what to do with a bunch of cool pictures of ships?

We went to our man, Owen Stephens, downstairs in R&D, who was working on a secret R&D project involving ships at that very moment. And we said, "Hey Owen, would you be interested in writing up some ship stats that go with these drawings?"

"Of course. This looks like something I'd do just for fun," he said. We were very happy with that answer. Then he wrote

all the text just by squinting at the pictures and making up stories about what he saw. We're even happier with what he produced.

Now Donald, as far as your question about point systems to create spacecraft... is it possible? Yes, it is. We have the technology. We have the will. Will we do it? Our man, Owen Stephens, downstairs in R&D, is being very secretive on the topic.

DEFEAT OF THE EMPEROR

Falling on Defel Ears

Dear Ganner,

Are you planning to add a new species every month that can be used as a character? When will we see statistics for Defels? Thanks.

Jason Dean

via Internet

Actually, we were planning on a species every two months since *Star Wars Gamers* is bimonthly.

I think we'll see statistics for Defels when someone writes a startling, true-life account of one young Defel's attempt to get affordable eye care in the aftermath of the decentralized health care industry during the first shaky years of the New Republic. Say what you will about his ruthless, tyrannical governance, but when the Emperor was in charge, the trains ran on time, if you catch my drift.

Alternately, you could look for their stats in the *Denizens of the Galaxy* RPG book out later this year.

DEFEAT OF THE EMPEROR

Okay, that's it for letters this issue. You're going to want to write in and let us know what you think. Real soon. I mean it. I'm not above bribery here, people. Write. ☺

Imperial Dispatch: Game Errata Corrections and Clarifications from the STAR WARS RPG

**Page 12, under Human
Racer template, under Skills**
Repair should be +3, not +5.

**Page 33, under Sullustan Species
Traits, under Automatic Language**
Add Basic.

**Page 34, under Trandoshan Species
Traits, under Automatic Language**
Add Basic.

**Page 39, right column,
replace paragraph 8 with ...**

DEFENSE BONUS: The character's bonus to his Defense. Note that this bonus does not stack with any bonuses for armor worn, and that wearing armor penalizes a character's speed and certain skill checks.

**Page 48, under Scout entry,
under Uncanny Dodge**

The second sentence should read: "At 4th level and above, the scout retains his Dexterity bonus to Defense (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by a hidden attacker."

Page 78, under Jump, under Special

A character who has the Run feat and makes a running jump check increases the distance or height by one-fourth, not one-third.

Page 82, Survival DC Table

The DC for the third entry (avoid getting lost...) should be 18, not 15.

**Page 83, left column,
replace paragraph 1 with ...**

LONG-TERM CARE: Providing long-term care means treating an injured character for a day or more. If successful, the patient recovers wound points or ability points lost to temporary damage at twice the normal rate. (That is, 2 wound points or 2 ability points per day instead of 1.) You can tend up to six patients at a time. You need common medical supplies as can be found easily in civilized regions of space.

**Page 83, left column,
replace paragraph 5, 6 & 7 with ...**

USE MEDPAC: A medpac is a simple medical device that is applied to a wounded or dying character and activated. A medpac restores 1 wound point to any wounded character. If the character is dying, the application of a medpac also stabilizes the character. The number of wound points restored by a medpac can be increased using the Treat Injury skill.

Result	Wounds Restored
5-9	1
10-14	2
15-19	3
20-24	4
25+	5

This application of the Treat Injury skill can't be used untrained. You must have at least 1 rank in the skill to increase the restorative effects of a medpac. A character can only be healed (have wounds restored) once in a 24-hour period by a medpac, though the character can be stabilized any number of times. Using a medpac depletes its contents (even if it is only used to stabilize a dying character).

STAR WARS Gamer Gets You Connected!

Use Bacta Tank: A specialized medical tank filled with the miraculous liquid, bacta, promotes rapid healing and acts as a powerful disinfectant. When a character has been severely wounded, bacta tank treatment is the best method for restoring lost wound points. With a successful Treat Injury check and a bacta tank, a character recovers wound points at a rate of 1 per hour (instead of 1 per day).

Page 94, under Frightful Presence
The DC is "10 plus one-half your level and Charisma modifier," not "10 plus your level and Charisma modifier."

Page 95, under Heroic Surge
Replace the last sentence with the following: "You may use Heroic Surge a number of times per day, based on your character level, but never more than once per round. 1st–4th level, once per day; 5th–8th level, twice per day; 9th–12th level, three times per day; 13th–16th level, four times per day; 17th–20th level, five times per day."

Page 123, under Bacta Tank, replaces paragraphs 3 & 4
Any character who has suffered wound damage can benefit from a bacta tank treatment, but its miraculous properties are most evident when used on a severely wounded patient. Bacta treatment is the best method for healing characters that have suffered massive amounts of wound damage.

Patients undergoing bacta tank treatment recover wound points at a rate of 1 per hour (instead of 1 per day).

Page 124, under Glow Rod
The glow rod projects a beam of light up to 10 meters, not 50 meters.

Page 124 & 125, under Medpac, replaces paragraph 2 & 3
A medpac restores 1 wound point to any wounded character. If the character is dying, the application of a medpac also stabilizes the character. The application of a medpac requires a full-round action. If the user has the Treat Injury skill, he or she can heal additional wounds, depending on the result of the skill check (see page 82). A medpac can't restore more wound points

than an injured character started with. A character can only be healed (have wounds restored) once in a 24-hour period by a medpac, though the character can be stabilized any number of times. Using a medpac depletes its contents (even if it is only used to stabilize a dying character).

Page 125, Table 7–4: Equipment
The fusion lantern was left off the list. It is a hand-held device, larger than a glow rod, that produces light and heat. It costs 25 credits and weighs 2 kg.

Page 131, left column, replaces the Vitality and Wound Points section
VITALITY AND WOUND POINTS
Vitality points represent your character's ability to turn a direct hit into a glancing blow or a near miss. Damage is usually deducted from your vitality points.

Wound points represent how much damage a character can take before falling unconscious or dying. Damage is deducted from your wound points only after you've exhausted your vitality points or when you are struck by a critical hit.

Page 131, right column, replaces the 0 Vitality Points section
0 VITALITY POINTS

If you run out of vitality points, you can no longer avoid real damage. Any additional damage you receive is deducted from your wound points.

FATIGUED
If you take any wound damage, you are fatigued. You cannot run or charge, and you suffer an effective penalty of -2 to Strength and Dexterity. In addition, each time you take wound damage you must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10) or be stunned for 2d6 rounds.

Page 131, right column, replaces the Healing Naturally section
You regain 1 wound point for each day of light activity or rest. For each hour of light activity or rest, you regain a number of vitality points equal to your level. A full night's sleep (8 hours) restores all vitality.

Want to be up on all the news from the *Star Wars Gamer* editors and the RPG's design team? Interested in free game adventures and exclusives? Then it's time you headed over to:

www.wizards.com/starwars

The official website of the *Star Wars Role-playing Game*

In February and March on the site, you can try our Character Quick-Converter and check out all-new *Rebellion Era Sourcebook* tie-ins. Plus we've stocked the RPGA's Living Force pages with lots of online source material, including setting information, NPCs, guidelines for campaign play, Gamemastering tips, details on where to play in your area, and excerpts from the campaign's rulebook. What else have we got for you? A new original online adventure each month, the latest on upcoming live chats on our site (and transcripts of the ones you missed), access to the Cantina (our in-character chat room), and the winners of our "What's This Guy's Story?" contest.

While you're checking out the weekly updates on the site, don't miss the magazine's own home page. There you can read our exhaustive *Star Wars* games bibliography, find out what class of gamer you are, and even get a sneak peek at Issue #3 of *Star Wars Gamer*.

Open for Business: The Cantina
Celebrate the launch of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* by making a stop at the Cantina at WIZARDS.COMMUNITY. This in-character live chat room is the place to be—to interact with other *Star Wars* characters, start up informal games, and create background stories for your new roleplaying characters. This moderated room is open 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. Eastern Standard Time and features an associated message board, so you can communicate in character with other players even when the room is closed. Register for your screen name now and visit the Cantina at www.wizards.com/chat.

Continued Next Issue

ROGUES GALLERY

Series 01: Pilots

ILLUSTRATED BY VINOD RAMS

Rogues Gallery is a recurring feature that shows character portraits around a theme. Each portrait is sized to fit in the "character illustration" box on the back of the *STAR WARS* character sheet. Players can use the portraits as depictions of their heroes, and GMs can use them as characters for the heroes to encounter. Have you got a theme you'd like to see in Rogues Gallery? Let us know!



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Eduardo



A CREDIT CRIMINAL FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

BY TISH EGGLESTON PAHL & CHRIS CASSIDY
ILLUSTRATED BY TOMMY LEE EDWARDS

Ihe moment her boots landed inside the Black Dust Tavern, Fenig Nabon let out the anxious breath she'd been holding since Sullust. The galaxy might be going supernova all around them, but the legendary smugglers' haven was just as she'd left it.

Well, almost. Tonight the air was as thick with unaccustomed tension as it was with smoke. Anxious words were exchanged in dozens of languages around crowded tables. Even without being able to understand the actual content, Fen had no problem following the tenor of the hushed conversations. Her fellow smugglers were as worried as she was and were bolting like womp rats into the closest holes they could find.

The desert planet of Socorro did little to call attention to itself with its inhospitable climate and vast plains of black volcanic ash. This was exactly why it was the preferred destination for so many on the Fringe, Fen included.

She sauntered over to the bar and tapped the shoulder of the Bothan sitting on her favorite stool. Fen jerked her head to the right and the Bothan quickly gathered up her drink and slinked away. Pulling herself up on the seat and resting her elbows on the bar, Fen sighed contentedly as she examined the hundreds of oddly shaped and brightly colored bottles lining the wall. Karl Archer, the tavern's proprietor, claimed to have the most impressive collection of intoxicants in the galaxy.

"Hey, Nabon," the bartender growled as he lined her up with a shot of Corellia's finest, then poured one for himself. "What do you think you're doing, chasing away the paying customers?"

"I always settle my tab, Karl!" she protested with mock indignation, and then smiled affectionately at the man who had been one of her adoptive father's best friends.

They each lifted their glasses and tapped them together. "To Jett," Karl said.

"To Jett," Fen repeated, her voice a bit hoarse.

They sipped their drinks and sat in contemplative silence, as was their custom. For Fen, the absence of the man who had rescued her as a child from a life of poverty and petty crime on the streets of Coronet was still a huge, aching hole. She knew Karl felt a similar loss; he and Jett had been friends for four decades. Karl had even tried to lure his fellow Corellian into "retiring" on Socorro too, but Jett simply hadn't been ready to leave the skies. Maybe if he had

In this story, Galactic smuggler Fenig Nabon meets her adroit partner-in-crime, Ghilsa Dogger. For stories chronicling their further exploits, check out *Star Wars: Tales from the New Republic* (1999), available in paperback!

he wouldn't have ended up dead on the floor of an Old Mantell cantina. Maybe if he'd minded his own business instead of trying to cool flaring tempers. Maybe if she hadn't left him alone. Fen clamped down brutally on that line of thinking. She had learned in her thirty-three years that maybes were a dangerous business. Still, maybe if...

"Has it really been two years?" Karl asked sadly, interrupting her thoughts.

"Two years, four months, six days," Fen replied, staring into the glass cradled in her hands.

Karl affectionately brushed away a strand of nut-brown hair that had escaped the tie at the back of Fen's neck. "He's looking for you," he said, with a nod in the direction of a man sitting alone at a premium corner table.

"Thanks." Fen collected her drink and climbed to her feet. She thought about bringing a bottle along, but reconsidered. The only things she needed with this client were sharp wits and a credit line.

"Don't you dare break orbit without seeing me first, you hear?" Karl called, as he moved toward a pair of Duros waiting impatiently a few stools down. "I'm coming, I'm coming! Where's that rusted bardot of mine?"

Fen couldn't fight back a small smile as she watched the graying man work his way down the bar pouring and talking, making sure everyone felt welcome and important. With a shake of her head, she turned her attention back to business.

Her client kicked a chair out with his foot as she approached. She took the invitation and sat, taking in his sharp, dark eyes and the way his arm was slung casually across the back of the empty chair next to him. He met her gaze evenly, saying nothing about how the little delivery he'd hired her for had dropped her right into the middle of the Rebel armada just before they jumped to Endor. He'd known they were massing there. He just had to have known.

"Can I get you something, Fen?" Talon Karide asked, finally breaking the silence.

A CREDIT FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

said blandly.

Fen reached into one of the many pockets on her flightsuit and drew out a datapad. She pushed a couple of keys and then slid it across the table to him. She watched Karrde carefully. Just what would it take to rattle him? Perhaps the three thousand in combat allowance she'd added to her fee would do the trick.

"Looks good," Karrde said after a couple of moments' examination. "I've already transferred ten thousand into your Corellian account, plus three thousand for the unexpected company."

Fen frowned. How did he always seem to anticipate her every move? "Thanks," she said lamely.

"Nice work, by the way," he continued. "On time and under budget."

Fen nodded. She was good at what she did and she knew it. She'd had the best teacher in the galaxy. "So..."

"So?" Karrde echoed.

"Heard anything interesting lately?" Fen knew better than to get into this type of exchange with Talon Karrde, but curiosity won out over common sense. Rumors were wild and with the media still in an Imperial chokehold, information was at a premium. Karrde would know what was really going down. In this case, it would be worth the price. Besides, she'd probably be able to turn around and sell anything new at three times what it would cost her.

"Perhaps," Karrde allowed, his face a mask. "You?"

"Rebels blew another Death Star," she began, adding the first credits to the pot.

"Why do you suppose the Emperor keeps building these things if the Rebels can take them out so easily?" Karrde asked, rubbing his beard.

"Don't know," Fen replied. "Maybe we should ask him."

"Unfortunately, we can't do that." Karrde paused a moment. "As you know, he's dead."

"Pity," Fen answered. "Vader, too."

"A rebel pilot named Skywalker took them both out," Karrde divulged easily.

"He killed Jabba, too," Fen said.

"Actually, I understand that technically it wasn't Skywalker," Karrde corrected.

Fen filed that tidbit away. "Doesn't look like Fett walked away from it either," she revealed, adding to the pot.

Karrde met and raised her. "I'd not count him out until I saw the armor and the body inside it."

Fen nodded, conceding the truth of that. "Still, it's been a regular blood bath," she concluded. So far it was a draw, which against Talon Karrde was pretty good. She swirled her drink around in the glass, letting the anticipation build, and then called sabacc. "Not bad for a single Jedi."

Karrde shrugged.

Chub! Fen swore to herself. She'd hoped to get him on that one. At least she had confirmation now. She'd picked up that little nugget after hacking briefly into the Rebel pilots' chatter during their pre-attack systems check over Sullust. She had thought,

she saluted him with her drink. "I'm all set, but thanks."

"I trust everything went as planned," he

hoped actually that she'd heard wrong. She was still mulling over the ramifications of the rise of the Jedi and what it could mean to the less law-abiding citizens of the galaxy when Karrde dropped his own proton bomb.

"Han Solo is alive."

The words hung heavily between them while Fen digested that piece of information. Karrde was paying particularly close attention to her reaction, Fen noted with annoyance. Part of her wanted to snap; that yes, the all-knowing Karrde was right, and what his sources had told him was true. She'd had a brief dalliance with the smuggler-turned-rebel when she'd been too young to know better. "How very nice for him," Fen said, taking a disinterested shrug.

"I would imagine he was pleased with the outcome," Karrde replied flatly and held out his hand.

Fen stared at it for a long moment before huffing and reaching into a pocket for a five hundred credit piece. She slapped it wordlessly into his palm, but couldn't bear to watch as it disappeared into his pocket.

Fen gave herself a hard mental shake. There'd be time to reflect on Solo later, when Karrde wasn't reading and recording her every reaction for future exploitation. "A lot of good people are loose now with Jabba gone," she said, changing course.

"Yes," Karrde agreed. "It will be some time, I think, before anyone has the resources to pay any attention to us."

"And even longer before the Hutt, or at least Jabba's clan, regroup," Fen added. She took another pull on her drink, wondering at the crafty smuggler's career goals.

He answered that question with the next neutral, carefully phrased statement. "I've decided it's a good time for building."

In their parlance, it was equivalent to a job offer. "I work alone, Talon."

"Jett wouldn't want that, Fen," he said quietly.

She felt the familiar lump form in the back of her throat. The sympathy expressed, the regret she knew so many felt with Jett's death, made her sense of loss all the more acute. She interrupted the kindness gruffly. "I'm still available for hire, though. And for you, at pre-Collapse-of-the-Empire rates."

"You are too generous."

Karrde spoke so dryly that he obviously wasn't being complimentary. Was he saying she could have driven a harder bargain with him? Fen shrugged it off. She had her reasons and trying to second-guess Talon Karrde was a hyperspace jump to insanity.

"Consider it my volume discount against your future jobs, Karrde."

His tone became even more brittle. "You seem very confident, Fen."

This time, Fen saw the bluff. She was always glad to work for Karrde, but he valued reliable operators, too. "On time and under budget are one of your favorite combinations," she reminded him, pleased that she could quote his own words back.

"Indeed they are," he agreed.

Fen knew he was letting the suspense build. She waited, and finally Karrde said, "As it happens, I might have something for you."

"Oh yeah?" Fen lifted an eyebrow and her glass. Karrde hadn't touched his cloudy drink. It looked like a Sunburn. Did it even have intoxicants in it? Paying *Anchor* to water down his own drink while

spiking everyone else's might be the sort of thing Karrde would do. In the interest of generosity and information gathering, of course.

"I'm looking for a base to headquartered my operation," Karrde said. He drew a data disk from the pocket of his black leather jacket and slid it across the table.

Fen picked up the disk and made a show of examining it for any obvious flaws before popping it into her datapad. She scrolled quickly through the information and whistled softly. "Some pretty exact specs here."

"I'm sure you can understand my need for certain precautions," he replied.

Fen nodded, still reading. Strong. He wasn't kidding about building an organization. In fact, under this plan, she'd take the bet Karrde would be on top of the smugglers' pyramid in four or five years. For half a second she reconsidered his job offer, thinking that getting in on the ground level might be wise. She dismissed the idea just as quickly.

Karrde might think her fault was generosity, but she thought his was loyalty. He'd be sure to gather beings around him who shared that value. Intense friendships would be inevitable. The mere thought of becoming that attached to anything or anyone was unthinkable. Jett had taught her

never to risk anything she couldn't afford to lose; it was a lesson Fen had taken to heart. No, she thought, it was better to keep herself open and remain an independent operator.

"You really think these kinds of precautions are necessary?" she asked, dropping her voice lower as she read the most unusual spec on the list.

Karrde stroked his beard before he replied. "Did Jett ever speak to you of the Jedi?"

Fen nodded, remembering the elaborate tales her adoptive father had woven for her. "He had the kind of healthy respect for them that one does for a krayt dragon—a mixture of awe and fear." She shook her head and the memories away. "Weren't Jedi supposed to be guardians of peace and justice? A sort of intergalactic police force?"

"Information about them before the purges is pretty scarce," Karrde replied. "But, it seems the Jedi served at the beck and call of the Senate, forwarding the Republic's agenda across the galaxy."

Yes, Fen thought, Karrde would now make it his business to find out whatever he could. He leaned forward and lowered his voice. "If the past is any guide, neither the Jedi, nor the new Senate the Rebellion is supposedly intending to establish are likely to appreciate our methods of doing business."

"We're talking about one Jedi here," Fen objected quietly. "Not thousands."

Karrde narrowed his eyes in annoyance. "Skywalker destroyed Darth Vader and the Emperor in a matter of days."

Her head was reeling. Sure, like everyone else she knew the Empire was probably on its way down, but the Jedi rising in its place? Karrde was overreacting. Wasn't he? "Yes, but—"

"And how long do you think it will take Skywalker to start

reestablishing a Jedi Order?" Karrde pressed. "And once he does that, how long before they turn their attention to us, with or without a new Senate?"

"I don't know. Five, ten years. Maybe twenty," Fen guessed.

"I still plan to be around then," Karrde leaned back in his seat again. "I also plan to be ready when they come."

Fen again glanced down at the specs on the datapad, seeing now why Karrde had come to her. "We know there were smuggling operations and even a Fringe during the days of the Republic," she said. "They must have had ways to get around Jedi then."

Karrde nodded. "I thought that Jett might have known of possible locations. He was working the lanes before we were even born."

"I'll see what I can do," she said casually returning the datapad to her pocket. Fen didn't want to tip Karrde off to the fact that she'd all but memorized Jett's obscenely detailed data files and couldn't recall anything meeting these specs. This job was going to take

some serious effort. But, if she got lucky, a satisfied Talon Karrde would pay for the drive upgrade, with enough left over for those Anakyd missiles. "Reach you through the usual channels?"

Karrde nodded again, then his eyes narrowed, taking in something going on behind her. Fen turned around in her seat, wondering

who had the misfortune of irritating Talon Karrde.

"Who is that, and what is she doing?" he asked tightly.

His attention was focused on an impeccably dressed woman, talking earnestly with a human male at the bar. Glittering rings on the woman's hand flashed through the murky tavern as she gestured elaborately. She stuck out like a Hutt at a charity dinner.

Fen turned back to her companion and held out her palm. Karrde put a fifty-credit piece in it. She didn't continue until he added another fifty.

"Her name is Ghitsa Dogger," Fen told him. "She's from Coruscant."

Karrde snorted and took back a fifty. "Obviously, in that outfit. What is she doing here?"

Fen waited and he placed the fifty back in her palm. "She's a con. I've seen her pushing scams for a while now." She pivoted around again for a closer look at the complicated appearing device in Dogger's hands.

"Is that what I think it is?" Karrde ventured, speaking the skepticism Fen was thinking.

"Looks like a retinal disguiser," Fen agreed. "But I've never seen one in that kind of configuration before."

"Any device to foil a retinal scan must be species-specific," Karrde observed coolly. "The one she has looks as if it can be modified for different species."

Fen rolled her eyes and turned back around. "I'd say the odds of that thing working are about the same as the Jedi returning," she said, repeating the well-used adage without even thinking.

"The Jedi have returned," Karrde answered.

"A Jedi," Fen pointed out. "Not the Jedi."



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"Not the Jedi."

"True."

Fen slapped the table and forced a smile. "Space, Karrde. I wish I had a legion of them here to mark the occasion that you admitted to being wrong."

He arched an eyebrow, completely unfazed. "I am not wrong; I merely have an incomplete picture of the situation. Only time will prove which of us has the better information."

A whole temple of Jedi would have to reappear before Fen would take that bet against Talon Karrde. For the millionth time, she wished for the quiet assurance of Jett at her side. He'd have known what to make of all this. "Her mark is a friend of yours?" she said, taking Karrde's interest as a chance to get off the topic of the Jedi.

"His name is Aves," Karrde affirmed, very quietly. "He is one of my newer people."

Fen pocketed her hard-earned credits. Frowning, she now wondered how this annoying woman had managed to get to Socorro ahead of her. She'd run into Dogger on Sullust, and Fen had cleared out when the Rebel fleet arrived. She'd seen Dogger on Corellia too, and before that, on Abregado-Rae. It was high time for Fen to find out what the con wanted from her.

She and Karrde both watched as Aves took the goggle-shaped contraption from Dogger to examine it.

"I may let Aves lose a couple hundred to teach him something, but Chitsa Dogger should know that there will be repercussions to cheating my people."

"I'll get her off your back," Fen said, standing.

He looked at her, and crossed his arms across his chest. "Are you implying I need your services to handle a Coruscanti con in designer wear?"

Laughing, Fen shook her head. "Never. This one's on me. She's got some information I want."

Fen strolled up to Aves and Dogger, just in time to see the man hand the goggles back.

"No thanks," Aves said. "I can't see needing something quite like this."

Evidently Karrde included a course in desert-dry delivery for his new hires. Aves had it down perfectly. Why, Fen wondered, feeling an odd prickle, was an experienced con bothering to do a job her mark obviously wasn't biting?

Fen had two methods of dragging uninvited into conversations. With her subtle approach, she actually used words first. "Good evening, gentle," she said. Aves and Dogger both turned on their stools to stare at her.

Aves slid off his seat. "Looks like you have another buyer anyway." "When banthas fly, Aves," Fen jerked her head back toward Karrde. "Boss wants you."

Aves was beating a retreat when Fen's shoulder sagged suddenly under the weight of a heavy, six-fingered hand. "Coming back here wasn't the healthiest thing to do," a menacing voice threatened behind her.

She glanced up into the bristling face of Gecee, a Gran hen about as much fun as Tatooine parasites... but bigger. Fen had made a point of avoiding him ever since she started taking his business. "Come on, Gecee," Fen replied, shrugging his hand away. "It's not my fault that Jabba wanted a smuggler who could actually operate a nav computer."

The Gran pointed a fat finger in her face and growled, "I'll deal with you later." He knocked her roughly aside, clearing a path straight for Dogger.

Dogger answered Gecee's challenge in a contemptuous, aristocratic voice that sliced through the hum of the tavern. "I should think you'd be too embarrassed to return here."

"Embarrassed?" Gecee's three eye stalks swayed menacingly. Fen felt the other activly in the tavern grind to a stop as everyone tensed to watch the unfolding spectacle.

The con didn't even bother to move from her barstool. The Gran took another step and towered over her. "The code you sold me brought a patrol down on us the minute we broke into Kuat!"

Dogger reached for her glass and took a sip. "And only a fool would have entered Imperial space with an untested recognition code for which he paid only two hundred credits."

Fen choked back the guffaw. Gecee wasn't the sharpest tool on the belt. Others weren't so polite, but then they weren't within

swinging distance either. The tavern burst into raucous laughter that had a slightly hysterical edge.

Still, Dogger had to be dumber than Gecee to cheat a mark, return to the scene, and then publicly taunt him. The Gran evidently thought so too. He roared furiously and raised his hand, looking to swipe Dogger off the barstool as if she were a bug.

Fen snatched up a bottle off the bar and smashed it over Gecee's head. He crumpled to the floor. Fen slowly turned back to Dogger, just in time to duck as a barstool sailed overhead.

The crash of the stool meeting a crowded table was the spark igniting the smoldering tension of the bar. Roaring in a dozen languages, fifty anxious smuggler scum, most of them pretty good friends of hers, surged up like a dirty, debris-laden tide. With a deep breath, Fen thanked the stars she'd had a stiff drink—it would dull the pain, but not her reflexes.

Before she could even stride into the fray, a hand grabbed her arm. Human. Instinct told her, Fen pivoted hard, ducking her head to the side. His fist sailed over her shoulder. She grabbed her assailant's flightsuit and swung him out of the way.

Fen turned back around just in time for her luck to run out. Someone grabbed her from behind, and swung so fast, she didn't have the time to duck. Her head snapped back as a fist of fur smacked into her chin.

Flung back, she could at least wind up for the return. Balling her left hand and putting muscle from years of hauling cargo pallets into it, she swung up and landed a really sweet punch right into the Goraf's jaw.

Fen winced as she got a better look at whom she had just hit.

Roaring in a dozen languages, fifty anxious smuggler scum . . . surged up like a dirty, debris-laden tide.

Hridinah was one of her best suppliers and she hoped he would respect the punch in the spirit in which it was thrown, rather than remembering the sting that accompanied it.

He grinned at her, showing no hard feelings, and peripherally, Fen saw his right fist rise. She leaped up, grabbed the Gotal's sensitive headcones in both hands and twisted. With a howling yell, Hridinah doubled over with a blinding headache and fell to the floor.

Feeling like a datasheet caught in a sandstorm, another hand seized her sleeve and swept her around. All Fen caught was a shock of sandy hair and brown eyes, then a pair of lips landed on her own, followed immediately by a boot basing her ankles. With a harsh snap, Fen went down.

Fen scrambled up, looking to land a real good one that would make up for dropping into the middle of an armada, all the Jedi jitters, Karrde's grating smug superiority, and a kiss from a smuggler who didn't stick around long enough for her to hit back. The part of her brain not looking for something to clobber realized that this was why Anchur was letting the fight go on. Tonight, it wasn't about violence or petty grievances. Tonight, it was about the release of tensions caused by overthrow of the Fringe hierarchy. After taking Hutt humps for so long and getting dragged along by the Imps like mynocks latched to a ship cable, this was about catharsis. And it felt really good.

Fen spied the back of the jacket of the being she thought might be the phantom kisser. She was winding up for a swing when the Duros lunged. She and Radek had always been on friendly terms, so Fen raised her left leg, spun on her right, and let the momentum carry her foot smack into the Duros' torso. With Radek's Duros physiology, the blow would barely wind him. Too bad it didn't do that. She'd forgotten about Radek's point two above light speed reflexes. The Duros snatched Fen's upraised leg and flipped her to the floor. Fen landed with a jarring thud.

A blaster shot reverberated through the tavern, perfectly aimed to bring down the braw, but not the roof. Every being in the place froze in mid-pummel. Two Rodians were sprawled across a table, motionless, each with long fingers locked around the other's throat, a centerpiece to the bizarre spectacle of broken furniture and busted glassware.

"That's enough!" Anchur bellowed from behind the bar, Cali-Merc blaster pistol cocked at his side. "You've had your fun. Anyone who doesn't help clean up pays the bill!"

Fen sat on the floor, sucking her knuckles contemplatively. Hridinah came up, still rubbing his headcones with one hand. He extended the other hand to Fen.

She took the offer and let him haul her up. "Sorry about the headache."

The Gotal shrugged. "No worse than the last telepath I ran into." He ambled off, leaving Fen's spirits decidedly lower. Chuba! Weren't Jedi telepaths, or at least empath? Was it true they could control minds?

Gecce was still comatose. She stepped over the snoring Gran, righted a barstool, and sat. Anchur just stared at her.

"Come on, Karl," Fen grumbled. "One more for the lanes?" An upended glass rested on the bar. Fen grabbed it and slid it down to Anchur.

"Table goes in that corner!" Anchur shouted to the Rodians. He turned a disapproving and surly glare on Fen. "We needed a good fight to clear the air, but why were you the one who had to start it?"

Fen nudged the Gran with the toe of her boot. "Gecce was going to wipe that con out, and use the leftovers to clean up the mess."

"And that was your problem because...?"

Fen shrugged.

"She could have at least stuck around to split the bill with you."

"Maybe she knew you were a friend of mine?" Fen asked with more hope than she felt.

"House rules apply, Fen," Anchur said sternly. "Even to you," he added with a pointed finger.

Wearily, she nodded. Fen patted down her pockets and fished out the hundred credits she'd bargained off Karrde—undoubtedly one of the shortest wins of her less than stellar information-brokering career. She tossed the hundred to Anchur. "That should cover it."

He shook his head. "Not even close."

"Come on, Karl," she protested, gesturing about the tavern. "It's not that bad in here!"

A really wicked smile slowly broke out on Karl's face. "You have to cough up at least another fifty for your share of Karrde's tab."

"I didn't drink anything off Karrde!" Fen yelled.

Karrde paid down his crew's bar bill when the fight started. The smile got bigger and Fen fought the urge to bust it off his face. "He said you owed him fifty and would cover the balance."

Good thing there weren't any bugs around to fly into her open mouth. Galling as it was, Fen knew as well as Karrde did that if a Corellian smuggler was worth five hundred, a Coruscanti con was only worth fifty. Especially at pre-Collapse-of-the-Empire rates. Even the glorious bottles lining Anchur's bar wouldn't dull this pain. With a disgusted sigh, Fen dug deeper into her pocket. "What's my total, Karl?"

"Four hundred," the barkeep replied. "And if I were you, I'd get off planet before Gecce wakes up or worse, his pals come looking for him."

Space take the galaxy and everyone flying in it! There were plenty of good candidates for venting her frustration on the road from the Black Dust to the Soco-Jarel Spaceport, but Fen resisted the urge. If I kick a rock, it'll just kick me back.

Why didn't she ever learn? Why did she always stick her nose into the middle of things? Gecce had never forgiven her for taking away customers who preferred a hauler who didn't lose, drink, or steal their cargo. The Gran was just the sort of sore loser who'd use a lousy bar fight as another excuse to chase her exhaust trail across the galaxy. And how did she ever think she could walk away a credit richer from any information exchange with Karrde? If this was the future Fen was married to, she wanted a divorce.

It wasn't a long walk back to the Star Lady, but it was a tense one, as she kept alert for any sign of Gecce's gang. She took a deep breath and glanced up to watch the ships cut bright lines in the night sky. Some of her frustration ebbed. Eyes fixed above, Fen stumbled and nearly fell over a rock in the road. Now they weren't even waiting for her to kick them.

A CREDIT FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

The port's exterior landing pads were just ahead. The ships squatted in their desert berths like benthos in a sand wall. Fen usually docked inside the port, a privilege that came with being a good customer for twenty years who had decent contracts and tipped well. But, like every other smuggler bolt hole, Soco-Jarel was filled well past capacity. Not that it mattered. Ten tons dead or grumpy. There didn't appear to be an Empire to issue a fine anyway.

The first ship loomed closer and Fen pulled her hands out of her pockets. If Gece's pals were lurking anywhere, it would likely be here. Waving through the outer berths toward the *Lady*, she approached every extended ramp and pile of cargo cautiously, knowing they could conceal an ambush. She kept an ear cocked for the whine of swoops that might signal an attack.

When the ship finally came into view, Fen whistled with relief. She had left the *Lady*'s running lamps on and the YT sat gracefully and alone, in a pool of yellow light.

Fen automatically counted out the eleven runs up the ramp to the side port side hatch. She glanced around, but no one had followed her. She thought the area really was as deserted as it seemed to be.

Reaching to the seam where the hatch met the ramp, her fingers found the thin pin she had wedged there before leaving for the run. The pin was there, but—

Fen's hand went to her blaster as the thoughts flowed faster than her comprehension of any single one. With enough time and equipment, Fen could hack through the *Lady*'s security. She generally credited her competitors and enemies with the same skill, even if she hadn't thought Gece could open more than a bottle.

A pin wedged into the hatch seam was Fen's last security failsafe. If someone managed to crack the hatch, the pin fell out. Her pin was there, but the customary distance separating it from the side had widened to more than four fingers, which meant someone had boarded her with a personal message to deliver. Fen didn't like personal messages. They usually came attached to personal grudges and blaster bolts at close range.

Fen pulled her blaster, took a step back, and keyed open the hatch. "I hope your life policy is paid up, because your next of kin are going to need it," she called into the ship.

"I haven't any next of kin," a woman's voice responded. "And you haven't a single glass that isn't chipped."

By the Emperor's beams, what was Ghito Dogder doing on her ship? The woman herself emerged at the hatch, in one hand holding two glasses and in the other, Fen's treasured bottle of Reserve.

"What are you doing here?" Fen snapped, fingering her blaster. "Not lurking a death wish?"

Dogder eyed the blaster with all the concern she'd give to an insect. "If you shoot, I'll drop your only glasses." Then, she twisted the vibroblade. "And the Reserve."

"Why do you think you're still standing there?"

The con artisted around on her heel. "Bes des." Dogder called over her shoulder. "Should you shoot me, you'll never know why I went to all the trouble of breaking into your ship."

In Fen's experience, a ship thief sharp enough to get through an Incom 433 security system in an hour wasn't stupid enough to turn

her back on an Itchy blaster finger! But then, they usually weren't so brazen as to try to imbed a bad code on Socorro either. Ten lolled at the hatch. "You got any other company?"

"Why would anyone bother?" Dogder shouted back. "You haven't anything worth killing or even maiming for, and I'm sure Gece is still out cold."

More or less true. But that still left why Dogder had bothered. Fen stalked in after her boarder.

Dogder was a ready sitting at the gaming table with a filled glass in front of her. "I should imagine you're thirsty after that long walk," she commented, splashing a couple of fingerfuls into the other glass.

Fen quickly surveyed the cabin, looking for any disturbances. Apart from the liberation of her Reserve and two glasses, and the addition of an unwelcome guest, all appeared to be as Fen had left it. Dogder, despite her calm facade, was moving carefully and keeping her hands above the table. She'd obviously been in someone's sights before.

Dogder slid the glass to the table's edge, but Fen wasn't taking it. "You've got a real dangerous way of getting a person's attention."

The con shrugged and took a sip of her brandy. "It's effective and has not proven fatal."

"Yet," Fen warned, leaning one shoulder against the bulkhead, buster resting at her side.

"I wished to thank you for extricating me from that mess," Dogder finally told her.

"I'm only interested in the apologies that come with compensation attached to them," Fen retorted.

"I would like to repay you—" Dogder began.

Fen cut her off. "Six hundred will cover it."

Dogder scrunched her face. "How do you figure that?"

"Three hundred and fifty to Anchir for the damage. Another fifty to cover someone's bar tab."

"What about the last two hundred?" Dogder queried. She gestured to a pocket of her coat and Fen nodded.

"The rest is for my pain and suffering."

Dogder slowly withdrew a fistful of credits and began counting them out on the table. "An injured party is not entitled to pain and suffering damages under Socorran law."

"That's not a problem," Fen assured her. "I'll just haul you to the nearest system that does."

The tiny con artist looked up from the pile in front of her and arched one perfectly shaped eyebrow. "Or kill me and take whatever I have?" she replied mildly.

Fen nodded. Why did this woman insist upon providing useful suggestions for her own demise?

Dogder returned to her calculations, setting out four hundred. She slid the credits over to join Fen's untouched drink at the table's edge.

"No time like the present to pay up the rest and get off my ship," Fen told her.

"Oh, do sit down, Fen," Dogder said. "You are spoiling my drink just standing there glowering."

"It's my drink," Fen retorted.

"Not full this side of port," the galter murmured, glancing at the credits she still held. She frowned, not liking something she saw.

"Excuse me!" Fen stammered, although she was very familiar with the Old Corellian proverb.

Dogder looked up, a quizzical expression crossing her face. "Chaos opens the door to opportunity," she repeated in Basic. "I had thought you'd be familiar with the phrase."

"I am," Fen assured her. "I'm just surprised you are."

"What kind of provincial do you think I am?" Dogder laughed. She reached into a pocket, returning the credits, and removed a nail file. She turned her attention to a fingernail that had apparently perturbed her. "My point is that out of the chaos of Jabba's death and the Rebel victory, opportunities are arising even as we—" she paused pointedly, before amending, "even as I drink."

Fen ignored the obvious invitation, but was interested enough to listen to what the con had gone to all this trouble to say. She holstered her blaster as an overture to encourage Dogder to talk. It worked.

"Smart beings, those with vision, are beginning to look for these opportunities," Dogder continued.

"Like taking the opportunity to pay me before I just take whatever you've got from your broken and bleeding body?"

"Precisely, Fen!" Dogder had the gall to raise her glass. "I can pay you a hundred—"

"You owe me two hundred, and another twenty-five if you keep drinking my Corellian."

Dogder waved her nail file impatiently. "I will pay you what I possess, or you can take the opportunity and see if I have something much more valuable to you."

"Like what?"

"Value depends on need. What do you need?"

"Peace, inner harmony, and a full bottle of Reserve," Fen told her, pointing to the half empty bottle.

"All three can be acquired easily, then."

"Is that so?" Fen mocked.

"Peace and inner harmony follow consumption of a full bottle of Reserve," Dogder blithely assured her.

"No," Fen corrected, biting back a grin. "What comes after consumption of a full bottle of Reserve is called a hangover."

Dogder nodded slightly, conceding the point. "So, apart from inner peace, harmony, and a Corellian, what do you need?"

Fen glanced at the con, worrying her lower lip between her teeth. Dogder was showing some unexpected talents. Maybe... before she could think about it too much, Fen slipped into her seat.

"As it happens," Fen hesitated, searching for the words, "I'm looking for a vacation property."

"A vacation property?" Dogder asked blandly.

Fen nodded.

Dogder looked down and began working gently on another nail. "What are your requirements?"

Fen put the sound of a shrug into her words, wanting to see how Dogder would play this. "The usual. Not too out of the way. Civilized."

"How big?" Dogder asked blandly.

"Smallish now, but with room for expansion." Thinking about Kastile's specs, Fen added, "Lots of expansion."

"If Jabba's Palace is a one, and a Bothan safehouse a ten, what would your ideal vacation home be?"

It was an insightful way to describe the parameters of society and security. Dogder understood exactly what Fen was seeking on behalf of Karide.

"A twelve," Fen told her.

Dogder took a minuscule sip of her drink. "So far, you've described a dozen places which might serve. Can you give me anything more specific?"

Fen wanted Dogder to do the work here. "Like what?"

One of Dogder's jingling bracelets clanged on the game table as she returned to her nail file. Fen had figured out that the woman wasn't actually drinking and wasn't doing anything to her fingernails either.

"Those of us in Jabba's line of work should take a lesson from his death if we don't want to end up the same way." Dogder spoke so dryly Talon Karrde could have taught her the tone. "In my opinion, a smart smuggler should be looking for a vacation home far away from the Jedi."

Now, it was Fen's turn to bluff. It took some effort. How Dogder had found out, she couldn't imagine, but the con was deserving of even more consideration than Fen had been giving her. "Who said anything about the Jedi?"

Ghita Dogder pursed her lips. Turning in her seat, she dropped the nail file back into her pocket. "I've

already had this conversation with beings who possess a similar lack of vision. Thanks for the drink." Her voice was clipped. "I'll see myself out."

Fen watched her go, not quite believing that the information she needed could really just drop out of the firmament like this. In Fen's experience the only things that fell out of the sky were things you didn't want hitting you. Asteroids and guano sprang to mind immediately. Still, if there was even a chance...

Fen scrambled to her feet and ran to the hatch before she could reconsider. By the time she caught up to her outside the ship, Dogder had one foot on the ramp and one on the landing pad. "Wait!" Fen called from the top of the ramp.

The con turned slowly around.

"I might be interested in such a place," Fen said. "Do you have any suggestions?"

"I might, or know someone who does," Dogder allowed, stepping back onto the ramp.

"Do I know this person?" Fen knew her eager tone canceled out the way she nonchalantly leaned against the side of the hatch.

Dogder made a sound that might have been a snort of disdain. "I'm hardly going to tell you that, Fen."

"Maybe you'll tell me."

At the first word, Fen went for her blaster but knew it was

A CREDIT FOR YOUR INSIGHTS

already too late. Gecee emerged from behind a landing strut, aiming a heavy blaster at her gut. What the Gran lacked in brains, he made up for in straight shooting.

Keeping one eye on Dogder, and two eyes and his blaster on Fen, Gecee slowly eased to the bottom of the ramp. "Take the BlasTech out, Nabon," he ordered.

Fen mentally ticked off the alternatives. Gecee was too far away to jump. She was standing on the ramp, under a running light, and was elevated, giving Gecee a nice, bright target. In other words, she was more than a card short of sabacc. Fen gently set her blaster down on the ramp.

"Kick it over the side," Gecee spit out.

Kick her blaster? Was he crazy? No, Fen amended. The Gran was, as Karrde would say, negotiating from a position of strength.

Gecee warily began climbing up the ramp. Siding up on Dogder's right, he seized the con's elbow in his left hand. The blaster in his right never wavered. Fen cringed, knowing how that kind of grip would hurt, but Dogder didn't even seem to notice.

Dogder merely glared at the fingers clutching her arm. "You are wrinkling my suit."

He huffed scornfully and yanked her forward. Gecee seemed as surprised as Fen when Dogder's high heels caught in the ramp. The con jumped over and Gecee grappled with her to keep them both from going down. Before he could pull them upright, Dogder lashed out with one hand and yanked on Gecee's ear.

With a strangled whimper, the Gran went down as hard as an ionized astromech.

Fen jumped forward, swallowing her momentary panic. "You didn't kill him, did you?" she exclaimed, kneeling by the Gran.

"On Socorro?" Dogder scoffed. She bent down next to Fen. "I have neither a death wish nor a desire to put a bounty on my own head by killing a smuggler, stupid though he is."

Gecee was out like a dead star, but still breathing. "What did you do?" Fen asked.

"The Gran equivalent of a Gotal headcone twist," Dogder explained.

It was nifty trick to remember. "If that hadn't worked, he would have shot me," Fen felt it important to mention.

Dogder shrugged and together they rolled Gecee to the ramp's edge. "It worked, and if it hadn't, you would have jumped off the ramp before he started shooting."

"Next time I decide anything involving shooting." The thud of the Gran hitting the ground punctuated Fen's remark.

"Gecee, you there?" The disembodied voice crackled through the night air. Fen met Dogder's eyes and saw the same feeling reflected there.

Fen leapt to the ground, but before she could deactivate Gecee's comlink, she heard the dreaded racket of incoming swoops. Snatching her blaster, Fen dove under the ramp. One breath later, the swoops roared in, kicking sand all over the landing pad.

Fen could feel the rumble of the swoops' repulsors reverberate through her boots. She hazarded a peek from behind the ramp. Blue blaster fire lancing past her head confirmed that the gang hadn't dropped by for caf and biscuits.

Fen spotted three swoops—two single seaters, both riders armed, and one double seater, with the rear man carrying a big repeating blaster.

Fen knew the riders were yelling at one another but couldn't hear their plan over the scream of the swoops. The high-pitched shriek of a Mobquel turbothruster was Fen's only warning. The two-seater zipped within a few meters of her protective ramp. The gunner fired wildly, and grit exploded around her. More bolts buried into the ramp.

She didn't want to kill thugs over a bar fight, but that repeating blaster was almost enough to make Fen regret her good manners. Still, Fen didn't want a Socorran death mark any more than Dogder did.

Dogder.

Where had she gone? Fen mentally clicked backward. The con had darted into the ship the moment they'd heard the swoops. Dogder wasn't going to use the *Lady's* guns to take out the swoops, but why didn't she put down enough cover fire for Fen to run back into the ship? Why was Dogder leaving Fen to take out a swoop gang with nothing but her sunny personality and a BlasTech set on stun?

The roar of the *Lady's* converters firing up answered these questions. *Blasts!* There's no way that con is stealing my ship!

All she needed were a few seconds in the clear. Glancing around, Fen looked for a distraction. Her eyes landed on the tow cable node embedded in the side of the ship, just to the side of the ramp. Freighters used the powerful magnet and cable attachment to haul cargo barges.

Fen grabbed a handful of sand and tossed it out beyond the ramp. Laser blasts singed the ground and slammed into the vibrating ship. Seizing a rock, Fen smashed the node's casing and punched the power pack.

The explosive bang split through the roar of the swoops. The tow cable shot out from the ship at a killing speed. Fen whipped around to look but wasn't fast enough to see the cable's magnetic hook smash into the nearest durasteel object—the two-seater swoop. She heard a metallic shriek and another crash as a second swoop snarled in the tow cable strung between the *Lady* and the two-seater.

That moment of chaos was all Fen needed. She rolled out from beneath the ramp, dashed into the ship, and slapped her hand across the control panel. The hatch snapped shut.

Fen bolted down the passageway and headed fore. She'd evict Dogder from the cockpit and flush her out the airlock later. Now, it was time to get out of there. She burst into the cockpit and choked on the angry yell. The pilot's chair was empty.

"Are you going to stand there all day?" a crisp voice called from the co-pilot's seat.



Il she needed were a few seconds in the clear. Glancing around, Fen looked for a distraction.

Fen turned to her, open-mouthed. The grifter was strapped safely into her seat, filing a nail. Before Fen could reply, the ship shook slightly. The Lady could handle simple blaster fire, but Fen wasn't going to wait around for the bigger guns to show up. She vaulted into her own seat and engaged the thrusters. "Why didn't you cover me with the guns?" Fen demanded, sparing a sour glance toward Dogder.

Dogder shrugged, not even looking up from her nails. "You told me you were to make all decisions involving shooting."

Before Fen could sputter an indignant reply, the ship rocked again. "Persistent little pests," she swore under her breath as she eased in the repulsorlifts.

The gang scattered and Fen released the tow cable. Uncumbered by dangling swoops, the Lady climbed gracefully upward.

Fen thumbed the comm switch just in time to hear flight control ask, "What in the galaxy are you doing, Fen?"

Fen smiled. She and Shind went way back and the Socorran controller would be sure to give her a hand now. "I annoyed Gecee and his pals, so I decided to clear out before they put a few nicks in the Lady's new paint job."

Laughter echoed through the speaker. "You're a real diplomat, Fen."

"Yeah, Shind, I'm a regular Organa," Fen snorted.

"Sit tight up there. Let me see if I can juggle a few ships and get you outta here before that crazy Grum lifts his own ship."

"I'd appreciate it." Fen switched the comm to standby and settled back to wait. Dogder continued to file her nails calmly, seeming content to wait for Fen to speak.

"Aves was never your mark was he?" Fen finally asked.

"No, he wasn't," Dogder replied, frowning at her handiwork.

Fen ran a hand across her mouth, not liking the answer or the implication of who Dogder's target had been, but it made sense. Dogder had been trailing her at least since Sullust looking for an opening to make her offer. "Why did you approach me about this property?"

"To show my gratitude and make amends," Dogder suggested.

Fen laughed loud. "Yeah, right. And Rebellion will win the..." She clicked on the words, the enormity of it hitting her again.

"My usual client doesn't have the vision to see that new precautions are in order considering recent events," Dogder eventually said, refitting her file to her pocket.

Odd that a small-time operator like Dogder and an ambitious smuggler like Karrde were both worried about the same thing. Maybe she was still just trying to convince herself, but Fen repeated what she had told Karrde, "Skywalker is just one Jedi."

"One Jedi who took out the Emperor, Darth Vader, Boba Fett, and a criminal organization that was centuries old. Imagine what more of them might do." Dogder sighed and stared out at the Socorran stars. "Jedi protect the galaxy from people like us. I knew I couldn't be the only who is concerned."

"So, you came to me thinking I might have customers who have more vision than yours do?" Fen asked.

"I did my homework," Dogder responded, with a hint of pride. "I know you do."

Someone like Dogder wouldn't put out this kind of effort if she didn't think there was a big score behind it. A really big score. Fen glanced at the coordinates Dogder had already programmed into the navicomputer. "So what's on Corellia?"

Dogder's eyes narrowed. "Information costs money, Fen."

"You're still in the hole, and a card short, Dogder," Fen countered. "Before we go anywhere, I want to know what we're going for."

"An old smuggler," Dogder finally conceded.

"Every lead begins there," Fen scoffed. "Tell me something I don't already know."

"An old smuggler," Dogder hesitated, then finished, "and his pet."

"Pet?" Fen echoed, suddenly rethinking the airlock option, but Dogder was nodding very seriously.

"The spacer told me about a small rodent called an ysalamiri."

"Ys-a-la what?"

"Ysalamiri. They are stupid and smelly, and the only thing they are good for is repelling Jedi."

Fen snorted again in disgusted disbelief. "I'm having hard time believing that a rodent could stop what Boba Fett and Darth Vader couldn't."

Oddly, Dogder didn't rise to it. She just nodded. "As do I. But my contact really believed it. And he was old enough to have remembered the days when we needed to be able to repel Jedi." She spread her perfect manicure out over the console. "I have a few other leads, but if you have a client looking for a possible Jedi-proof base, we need to find where ysalamiri come from before someone else does."

The comm came to life again. "Okay, Fen," the port controller announced. "You're clear after the Hornet Interceptor. And Gecee will be facing a customs inspection."

Fen smiled and flipped the switch back on. "I owe you."

"You know my favorite compensation," Shind replied fondly.

"Next time there'll be a case of Chadian rum in my hold just for you," Fen promised. "Thanks again, Shind."

"Clear skies, Fen."

The channel closed, stranding the cockpit in an uneasy silence. Fen mentally counted her cards again and made her offer. "After flight costs, if your information pans out, we split the commission seventy, thirty."

Dogder smiled thinly. "How very generous of you."

"I get the seventy," Fen corrected, pointing at her own chest with her thumb to emphasize the point.

Dogder frowned. "That hardly seems fair. It is, after all, my lead."

"If you don't like it, the escape pod's in the back," Fen smirked. "And this is a one-time deal. As soon as we're done, I drop you at the nearest space port."

Dogder furrowed her brow and pursed her lips. The con made a show of consideration, but she didn't have many other options. They both knew it.

Fen watched the Hornet blink into the void. It was now or never. "Sixty, forty," Fen said. "That's my final offer."

"Deal," Dogder finally conceded, extending a hand, palm up. Fen slapped hers across it. Their bargain sealed, Fen pulled back the lever and the Star Lady rocketed them into hyperspace.





THE MONSTER

BY DANIEL WALLACE
ILLUSTRATED BY OLE SØRENSEN

The monster was about to uncover a secret, but it did not know it.

The monster hung suspended in space, blue-black infinity in every direction. But it was not in space. The monster swept its fleshy tail and tucked its legs against its body as it rose through the water column.

The monster was huge. Despite the absence of a backdrop to give comparative cues, immense power was evident in the span of its shoulders and the clamp of its overbiting jaw. The monster had the supple body of a tusk-cat and the snaky neck of an eel. Its great size made it appear even more a creature of the vacuum, for it seemed impossible that Naboo's oceans could harbor such a Leviathan.

It had lived for centuries, ruling the kingdoms of the deep with the lazy disdain of absolute power. The reverent whisperers of the surface—mere dirt-dwellers—called it a *sando aqua* monster.

But even the mightiest fortifications ultimately crumble. Upon closer examination it was clear that the monster's pupils were milky with age. Its limbs twitched with involuntary fits. Its gills were frayed like tattered lace.

The monster was dying.

A pair of opee sea killers, all eyes and teeth, swam up from the blue. Seduced by the stink of death, the two crablike fish jetted forward, mouths wide and bristling. The two opees ripped bits of flesh from the monster's flank as the predator suddenly became the prey.

Too weary to fight back against these nimble enemies, the monster pumped its massive tail. It quickly rose up and away. The dogged opees clung to the trail, their noses sampling the ribbon of blood leaking from the monster's flank.

The monster was higher now. Fingers of white light stabbed down from above. A trick school of daggerfish broke apart in the monster's bow wave like wind-scattered steam.

One opee swam close and spat out its sticky capture-tongue. An instant later, the monster's tail swept back in mid-stroke, bashing the smaller fish on the side of the head. The dead opee sank belly-up into the dark waters below.

The second opee stuck to the hunt, drifting in the monster's wake. They swam above a row of rocky columns that guarded an underwater landscape of peaks and pits. Drifting curtains of green glie caught the light from above and sparkled as if they had been knitted from emeralds.

The opee swam high then jettied down like a dive-bombing bird, tearing loose a piece of the monster's back. The monster's booming cry would echo halfway across the ocean before it dissipated. Blinded with rage and pain, the monster thrashed upwards with delirious effort.

It was quite surprised when it breached the surface.

The monster sailed through the air, wet skin glistening. Falling was a rare sensation for it. Landing hard on a solid plane was an utterly novel one.

Eighteen hundred tons of flesh hit the beach with a brain-splitting thud. Bones snapped like twigs under a soggy blanket. Stunned, the monster sucked unfamiliar air deep into its compound lungs. It pawed at the sand with its front claws, but could not move itself.

The monster had always been a creature of mystery and menace. Now it was helpless.

Yet something else was visible where the monster had scraped away the sand. Deep in the ground, bright against the black bedrock, the silver of scratched durasteel glinted in the morning sun.

The creature of myth had revealed a lair of shadows. Neither one had ever been seen by outsiders.

Before the day was done, that would change.

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THE MONSTER

"Panaka! I see him!"

The call broadcast tinily in Lieutenant Panaka's ear through his helmet-mounted comlink. Heavy running steps thudded on the floor above Panaka's head, accompanied by the unmistakable brapp brapp of a blaster pistol. Panaka swore silently. They were supposed to capture the suspect, not kill him. Blaly knew her training better than that.

Panaka eased farther down the rickety wooden staircase, struggling to see in the darkness of the perfume cellar. Now that the situation had degenerated into a firefight, he regretted not being upstairs to act as Blaly's backup. But it had been his decision to split up and herd the target into an ambush. The tactic had been drilled into him at the Tracker's Guild on Tolan by a disciplined Zabrak he still remembered with respect. Panaka hated to think the tactic might be flawed. No, he thought, the tactic is sound. If it fails, it is only because I have erred in applying it.

Panaka's boots touched softly on the staircase. The leather of his Royal Security Force uniform creaked as he brought his S-5 blaster pistol up under his right ear. Upstairs, things had gone eerily silent. He considered comlinking Blaly but didn't want to disrupt whatever advantage the silence might afford.

From above came a crash, a thump, a panicked comlink call - "Panaka, he's coming, he's coming" - and heavy slapping footfalls on the floorboards. Panaka brought his blaster to bear on the cellar door at the top of the stairs. His index finger hovered over the trigger for the anaesthetic dart shooter.

The sheer violence of the impact amazed him. With a terrific smash the door flew off its hinges. Panaka dropped face down on the stairs and brought his arm up over his head just as the door fell on top of him. The crushing weight of a body landed atop the door, then suddenly sprang off. Panaka grunted in pain at the squeeze, then shoved the door off the side of the stairs. He pulled himself into a crouch, gun in hand. The door hit the cellar floor with a clatter.

There was no sign of the suspect. The cellar of the Port Landien Perfumery was dark, with many concealed corners among the head-high bottle racks. But like all perfumeries, this basement was equipped with a drainage trough—it was how Panaka had entered the room in the first place to set up his ambush. If he didn't reach the trough before his quarry, the runner was as good as gone.

Panaka jumped off the side of the staircase. Holding his blaster in both hands he advanced quickly through the racks of ripening fragrances.

He was halfway to the drainage trough when the attack came. As he passed an alcove formed by three intersecting racks, what could have been mistaken for a pile of rags on the stone floor suddenly grew long arms, with crooked fingers. Springing from its fetal crouch, a Gungan launched itself at his chest.

Panaka swung his pistol around, but the Gungan took hold of Panaka's wrists before he could bring his weapon to bear. Panaka fell backward, releasing his body in mid-fall. He hoped to pull the Gungan into a flip, but unexpectedly crashed against a perfume rack. Broken glass and pungent liquid rained on him as he slid to the floor.

The Gungan, striking brown-and-yellow stripes defining his wiry

physique, smashed Panaka's wrists against the cold floor. The S-5 skidded out of reach. The two opponents grappled in a floor tangle, muscles straining for leverage. Panaka suddenly pulled his left hand in and threw his weight over to the same side, triggering a roll that left him on top and the Gungan underneath. Despite the advantage he still could not free his arms from his attacker's vice-like clamp.

Panaka knew Gungans were strong. This one was apparently stronger than most. His wrists popped as the radius and ulna ground together. Panaka's face was a misshapen mask of strain and suffering. The Gungan grimaced right back at him. Their faces were mere centimeters apart.

With a wet crack, the Gungan's prehensile tongue exploded outwards. It smacked Panaka's nose with an agonizing snap and briskly withdrew. A second lightning jab snatched the soft flesh beneath Panaka's left eye, taking a piece of skin with it.

The third tongue-jab hit Panaka's left eyeball and struck there. The Gungan, seeing the adhesive had set, began to suck its tongue back into its mouth.

Panaka did the only thing he could, jurling his head forward with all his strength, slamming it straight into the Gungan's snout. The force of the headbutt squashed the Gungan's elastic facial cartilage, forcing the top teeth against the bottom row with a loud snap. The tongue was caught in the middle. The Gungan howled in pain. Panaka slammed his head forward a second time, knocking his attacker right between the eyestalks. The Gungan relaxed his grip as his body went limp.

Holding one hand over his throbbing eye, Panaka slowly sat up. Behind him came the racket of Blaly descending the stairs.

Bits of broken transparisteel lay strewn across the floor like a minefield of ice. A lake of perfume pooled around his knees. Panaka wrinkled his nose at the smell, and was rewarded with a fresh trickle of blood from his nostrils.

They'd nabbed their target, but for now all Panaka could think about was a bandage and a shower.

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Sergeant Blaly loaded the groggy Gungan into the back of the Flash speeder and secured him with restraint websbing. Electronic shackles hobbled the suspect at his ankles and wrists.

Panaka had hoped the freshness of day would cheer him up, but the morning sun only irritated his swelling eye while the heat brought out the stink of perfume in waves that made him light-headed. The scents he was wearing on his Royal Security Force uniform would have cost a monarch's riches if purchased individually, for the people of Naboo coveted perfumes in the manner with which other cultures valued fine wines. But the perfumery's carefully-crafted aromas of musk and milliflower were now dried in a single sticky mix across Panaka's leather jerkin, exuding an unidentifiable but definitely unpleasant scent.

Blaly pulled off her helmet and wiped one hand over her fore-head as she walked over to Panaka. "Think we should get back to Theed? We're starting to attract an audience."

Panaka glanced up. The Port Landien Perfumery was located in the town's sparsely populated outskirts, but a farmer was leading a

small boy by the hand over the nearest hill, undoubtedly to catch a glimpse of this unusual criminal. Panaka frowned. He was a Royal Security Force officer, not a carnival barker. Panaka climbed behind the steering yoke of the speeder and fired up the engines. The moment Bialy joined him in the shotgun seat, he jammed the accelerator and bounced onto the dirt road with a puff of dust.

The wind of their passage helped strip away the reeking bouquet that clung to him. Panaka looked back. Their prisoner was glumly surveying the scenery. "You think he had an accomplice?" he asked Bialy.

"Panaka, I already told you. I don't know." Bialy held out both hands, palms up. "I never fired. Somebody took two shots at me. If it was the Gungan, somehow he made the weapon vanish. And if it was an accomplice, the guy is nowhere to be found."

Panaka grunted. He hated to leave the matter unresolved, but the instructions from the Royal Security Force office in Theed had been clear—Captain Magnaqua wanted the suspect in custody at once.

A half-kilometer ahead, the tiny figure of a shaak tender came into sight, standing in the middle of the road and waving at them to stop. Panaka scanned the green hills, wary of an ambush. He pulled the speeder to within twenty meters of the tender's flock and slowed to a barely perceptible crawl, ready to gun the engine at any sign of trouble. Giving the shaak tender the "go ahead" sign, Panaka watched the herdsman's balloon-bodied animals shuffle one-by-one across the roadway in front of him.

"Don't even think about it, Gungan," he called into the back seat. The Gungan didn't answer. Panaka wondered if the injury to his tongue had impaired his speech.

The shaak, shaggy with midsummer wool, ambled across the roadway. The shaak tender raised his hand in thanks as Panaka throttled back up to cruising speed. Bialy turned in her seat and returned the shaak tender's wave.

"So how about it, Gungan?" Panaka called. "You have a friend back there at the Port?"

The Gungan kept his voice low. "Mesa sayen nutten."

"You have a friend with a blaster?" Panaka flexed his hands on the steering yoke. "Trying to kill a Royal Security Officer is eight years removed from vandalism and theft, friend. We can charge you with attempted murder of a royal protector. To a Naboo judge, that's one step removed from regicide."

The Gungan looked to Bialy, then to Panaka. "My no haven a blaster. Mesa doen nutten."

"We've got witnesses who reported a Gungan sneaking around their town," Panaka shot back. "Crimes were committed during the same period. Most people would peg you as the likely suspect."

The Gungan laughed. "To dem, mesa only crime tis bein a Gungan."

Panaka shook his head. Typical.

The cynical cheer drained from the Gungan's face. He spat out some blood. "Yousa no know what yousa doen," he said sadly.

Bialy turned in her seat. "What do you mean?"

"Yousa link yousa doen right. Boot what yousa doen tis terribad."

"Care to elaborate?" Panaka offered.

"Not to yousa. No can trust yousa."

"Sulf yourself."

The Gungan slumped down in the rear seat and heaved a sigh. "Berry bombbad for yousa world. Berry bombbad for yousa."

Panaka scowled. "Is that a threat?"

"No no, tis no threat. Tis truth. Nutten yousa can do to change dat." He looked down at the binders that held his wrists. "Un now, nutten mesa can do neither."

• • •

Scrip scrip scrip

Panaka held the pick, between his thumb and forefinger, twisting it to reach the inside of the liquid-cable cylinder. The little cartridge normally held compressed spraymist which hardened into a continuous spool of rope when fired. Unfortunately, the cartridge gummed up easily.

Scrip scrip scrip

The sound seemed quite loud, here in the empty confines of the Royal Naboo Security Force's dispatch office. Panaka sat on the bench in front of his locker, last

week's assignment board propped on his knees as a makeshift table. Sundry components of his S-5 blaster pistol lay scattered across the board's surface.

In fact, Panaka did not know which seemed louder—the scrape of the pick or the whine as he exhaled through the bacta sheath on his broken nose. A smaller bacta patch covered the angry blotch beneath his left eye. The Palace healer who had treated him had ordered Panaka to take the rest of the day off. But Panaka had nothing he wanted to get home to. He sat alone in the room, content for the moment with the straightforward challenge of ungumming a gadget. Light spilled into the room from a row of open windows, looking out onto a narrow avenue and a boathouse on the shore of the river Solleu.

Panaka placed the cylinder between his palms and rubbed them rapidly back and forth. Heating the cartridge often loosened the dried goo inside. He lifted the pick again and resumed the scrip scrip scrip of cleaning.

With a careful scrape Panaka pulled a curlicue of dried spraymist out of the barrel's inner workings. The cleansing complete, he began reassembling the puzzle pieces of his S-5. The blaster pistol was already a heavy weapon, burdened with two oversized scopes and an anaesthetic dart cartridge. If Panaka's prototype liquid-cable shooter were to ever become standard equipment it would have to be small enough not to interfere with the aiming and firing of the S-5. And it would have to stop gumming up.

Panaka was determined to make it work. A grappling hook on a liquid cable line would allow officers to rappel down buildings and evacuate the King in emergencies. His anti-terrorism classes had taught him that the difference between life and death was often a matter of seconds.

The door to the dispatch office shot up into the ceiling. DuKane, a

THE MONSTER

rangy mustachioed officer with dark soulful eyes, walked through the entrance wearing a smile. His face lit up when he saw Panaka. "I just saw your Gungan, Panaka, so of course I had to come and see you," DuKane whooped with laughter. "And it's true! You look worse than he does!"

Panaka flashed a quick smile, tight and false. He said nothing.

DuKane pulled his helmet from his locker. "The perfume was a nice touch. I can still smell it from here. Reminds me of my grandmother."

"That perfumery lost dozens of bottles of Mortilcano-era stock." Panaka slid the S-5's auxiliary targeting scope into its holding bracket. "It's hard on the owners."

"Yeah, well stay out of trouble Panaka." DuKane headed for the door. "King Veruna's hosting a visitor from Coruscant. The offworlder is in with the captain right now. And they seemed to be real interested in your Gungan." Reading Panaka's skepticism, he added, "No joke this time. Keep on your toes." The door sealed behind him, leaving the room quiet once more. Panaka's shoulders visibly relaxed.

By their nature, security officers were a tight-knit crew. Forced to uphold a professional image among the citizens of Naboo, officers gathered together in the off-hours to blow off steam with ribald banter and wild practical jokes. This was the unseen culture of the stationhouse. It was a culture Panaka found completely alien.

It wasn't that he hadn't tried. But while Blaly fired off playful insults with ease, Panaka came across as stiff and counterfeit when discussing anything not directly related to his job. Panaka's fellow officers frustrated him in a way no enemy ever could. No matter how hard he studied, he would never be their after-hours buddy. No matter how long he trained, he could never regale them with far-fetched yarns over drinks in a tapcafe.

If he could not win their friendship, then he would earn their respect. Panaka had had years of elite offworld education. Most of them had never left Naboo. Through the sheer weight of his competence he would command their admiration, and he would reinforce it every day by never, ever deviating from a sterling example. He was a lieutenant now, but he would not be for long. And Captain Magneta, skilled as she was, could not be the head of the Security forces forever.

Panaka aligned the magnetic bolt on the liquid-cable cartridge and snapped it into place. The prototype chamber sprouted from the S-5 like an outrigger pontoon, just above the barrel and slightly offset so it wouldn't block the scope. Panaka hefted the assembled weapon and sighted down its length, taking note of the added weight.

His comlink crackled. "Panaka here," he announced, holstering the S-5.

"Lieutenant, this is Captain Magneta. Report to my office at once."



Like the woman who occupied it, Captain Magneta's office was stern and uncompromising. Completely bare save for a desk, chair, and a single family holograph, the room seemed more like a cell than a

workplace. Panaka stood at attention, unacknowledged, while Magneta conferred in low tones with a man dressed all in black.

At last Magneta turned to regard him. A tall woman with hawk-like features, she kept her white hair pulled back in a short, tight braid. The brass plates on her Captain's uniform gleamed with fresh polish. "First, Lieutenant, let me congratulate you on your arrest. Naboo is safer because of your actions."

"Thank you, Captain," Panaka responded dutifully. "Of course I did not do it alone. Sergeant Blaly was my partner on this assignment."

"I expected you to say that, Lieutenant, but I know you don't mean it." Magneta regarded him shrewdly. "Blaly is a fine officer, but I know your education. I recognize your strengths. Credit for the capture goes to you."

No response was required, so Panaka stayed silent. Magneta gestured to the man at her left. "This is Sale Pestage of Coruscant, special adviser to Naboo's own Senator Palpatine."

Trim and fit, with thinning black hair and a tight cruel mouth, Pestage looked like an exercise instructor forced to dress up for a funeral. His layered Coruscanti suit of business black would seem wildly out of place on one of the colorful avenues of Theed.

Pestage nodded at Panaka. "Lieutenant. The Gungan in custody has been identified as Kroke Modborn, wanted for crimes including treason and murder. He is being remanded to my custody and will be shuttled offworld within the hour. Senator Palpatine thanks you for your bravery and cooperation." Pestage shifted uneasily, looking for a place to sit down, but Magneta's office lacked guest chairs.

Panaka tensed and looked at Captain Magneta. "The Gungan is to be taken offplanet?"

"That's correct."

"This is a Naboo matter."

"And it will continue to be handled as such," Magneta responded with a touch of annoyance. "Senator Palpatine is a native of Naboo; in case that fact escaped you while you were offplanet yourself."

"With all due respect, Captain, the senator is a politician. This is a Royal Security Force matter."

"Be careful, Lieutenant." Magneta raised a warning finger. "You claim respect, yet you show none to me or to my office. The extradition orders have been signed by King Veruna. I serve the king. If you no longer obey the ruler of Naboo, then you have no right to wear that uniform."

"My apologies, Captain," Panaka said in a quiet voice, but he did not break gaze with Magneta.

Pestage cleared his throat to break the tense silence. "I know I speak for Senator Palpatine when I say Kroke's victims will be avenged. The killer will be brought to justice."

Panaka saw no advantage in arguing the point further. "Sergeant Blaly thought there was a second person at the scene. A possible accomplice."

"Yes, I read your report," Magneta answered. "And you will conduct a follow-up investigation into that matter as soon as you have completed your immediate assignment."

"Immediate assignment?"

"Traffic control. I realize the healers placed you off-duty, but a sea creature has run aground on a isolated stretch of coast north of Port Landien. I'd like you to command a small team of officers to divert

pedestrian and vehicular traffic from the area for the public's safety until we can organize a disposal crew."

"Sounds simple enough. Another opex?"

"I suppose so, yes." Magneta held out her hand and Pestage placed a datapad in it. "Your squad won't be in the cleanup area. The carcass should be disposed of by nightfall, so just keep the vicinity secure until then. Orders are in this datapad. You are dismissed."

Panaka took the datapad and turned to leave.

Pestage stepped forward and extended his hand. "Good luck, Lieutenant, and thank you again. I will be returning to Coruscant in the morning."

Panaka accepted the other man's hand and shook it firmly. Pestage leaned closer, studying the bandages on Panaka's face. "Those injuries—do they hurt?"

Panaka shook his head. "I don't let them."

• • •

The screeching rootjiggers were enough to drive anyone mad. Hulks of nola grass flanked the roadway where Panaka stood, rustling in the fading light of dusk. At the base of each nola stalk prowled a finger-sized rootjigger beetle. Panaka couldn't see any but he could hear them all, as they forced air through tiny holes in their shells in the hopes of attracting a mate. The jiggers only mated a few days out of each year but their squealing was always loudest at sunset.

Panaka looked down at his own lengthening shadow as it stretched along the road, nearly extending all the way to his Royal Security Force speeder. Parked sideways to block traffic, the speeder winked back at him with the flashing hazard light mounted on its hood.

Not that traffic's a problem. Panaka thought. Not only was this region unpopulated, but it was much too far from Port Landien to attract curious gawkers. Only a single road serviced the area, and Panaka hadn't seen any vehicles drive down it in over an hour.

Behind him the terrain grew rockier the closer it got to the water. Panaka threw a glance over his shoulder. Jagged upthrusts of land threw sharp black shadows in the orange light, while tufts of sharp-edged beach grass grew between flat tables of rock. The road he was standing on extended back in that direction for a kilometer, then veered left to follow the ocean coast down to Port Landien. By doing so it avoided a natural wall of serrated black rock fifty meters high. Behind that barrier, Panaka knew, lay the beached sea creature that was the reason for this dreary assignment.

Three other Royal Security Force officers, including Bialy, had also drawn this detail. Panaka had positioned them in a rough semicircle surrounding the zone but he couldn't see any of them behind the hills. A mild breeze blowing in from the shore tickled his scalp, and Panaka decided he was glad to have left his helmet in the passenger seat.

He saw the dust cloud approaching before he saw the other speeder. A battered green civilian model, the speeder slowed as its driver apparently caught sight of the roadblock. The setting sun glinted off its windscreens. Panaka wondered if the driver could see him amid the glare. He raised his arms, palms out, and motioned for the other speeder to stop as he slowly walked back toward his parked vehicle.

Several dozen meters distant, the speeder idled to a full stop. The dust cloud settled.

Panaka arrived at his own speeder and reached in the rear compartment for his datapad. The passengers—no, the single driver. Panaka corrected himself as he squinted—might need directions for alternate routes to Port Landien.

Dust billowed up suddenly. The green speeder shot forward as if kicked by a giant boot. Panaka froze for a split second, judging whether to draw and fire, but there was no time. He sprang away from the roadway, hit the grass, and rolled.

With a wrenching metal crunch even louder than the din of the rootjiggers, the suicidal vehicle plowed into the side of Panaka's speeder. The Royal Security Force speeder stubbornly fought the shove. An invisible tractor beam dug out a furrow of dirt as the vehicle skidded sideways. The roadway's resistance quickly overloaded the beam, and Panaka's speeder—suddenly unencumbered—bobbed away over the rocks.

The other speeder, front end crumpled and smoking, steered around chunks of debris and accelerated down the road toward the coast. Panaka rose to one knee and fired six quick shots. Several shots hit the rear gate but the speeder didn't stop.

Cursing, Panaka got to his feet and ran toward his speeder, which had floated to a stop a dozen meters away. "Bialy!" he yelled, keyring the comlink clipped to his collar. "Pestrak! Dunnill!"

He couldn't hear anything over the shriek of the jiggers. "This is Panaka," he announced anyway, hoping someone could hear him. "I'm in pursuit of a speeder that smashed through the roadblock. Green SoroSuub model, damaged front end, one driver. Call it in and get over here now!"

He reached the shattered Royal Security Force speeder and hopped inside, punching the ignition switch and exhaling in relief when the engines shuddered to life. Squeezing the steering yoke as if he could throttle the other driver just by willing it, he bounced over the uneven turf and steered back onto the roadway. Panaka opened up the throttle and the engines roared. The flashing hazard light on his hood still blinked weakly.

Panaka peered through the cracked windscreens for any sign of the other speeder. He was preparing to brace for the sharp left turn at the coastline when he suddenly caught sight of the green speeder, parked behind two coal black boulders at the foothills of the rise. Panaka jerked the steering yoke and slammed on the brakes, slewing the speeder around in a squealing stop that banged the passenger side against the rocks. He winced out of habit, but he could scarcely do any more damage to a vehicle that was already a total loss.

PANAKA FROZE FOR A SPLIT SECOND, JUDGING WHETHER TO DRAW AND FIRE, BUT THERE WAS NO TIME.

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He leapt out, but the other speeder was empty. Panaka squinted up at the crest of the mount, ruby sunlight burning the corners of his eyes. Beyond that rim was where the beached animal lay.

The black rocks piled up above him, some crowned with a cap of moss, others split by prickly clumps of beach grass. There was no sign of the speeder driver, though Panaka admitted to himself that the attenuated shadows were deep enough to hide a small army.

He started to scale the slope, clambering over the polished rocks on hands and feet. The racket of the insects was gradually supplanted by the soothing sound of surf. Ten meters up, his boot slipped on a rock caked with bird guano. Panaka fell hard onto a jutting spar that broke his fall and nearly broke a rib. By the time he reached the top, salty sweat drenched his bandages and stung his sore eye. Rubbing a hand over his face, Panaka blinked and gazed over the rim of the summit into the valley below.

Fully half a kilometer wide, the tidal basin was enclosed by high cliffs in a broad U-shape. During high water the cliffs would form a tiny bay, but at the moment the drained basin revealed a floor of black sand and glistening puddles. And smack in the middle, stark against the indigo carpet—

It was fantastic. And it was horrifying.

Panaka could not comprehend the size of the creature. His eyes picked out familiar details—a breaking wave, a circling bird—but, like an optical trick in which straight lines appear curved, he could not reconcile them against the backdrop of that thing. He experienced a brief moment of vertigo as his eyes struggled with his brain.

The thing lay splayed out on its side in the tidal basin, long and serpentine. Its submerged hindquarters were partly visible beneath the churning surf. The rest of the creature lay prone on the sand, its sagging flesh pulled down by the unaccustomed weight of air. Panaka was reminded of the cacodemons of Naboo folklore, that slithered up from the underworld and were struck dead when touched by the scouring rays of the sun.

A monster, he thought, and a dim memory corrected him. No, a *sando aqua monstrosus*. Long theorized by cryptozoologists but never substantiated through hard evidence, the *sando* had a powerful pull on the popular fancy. To some it was myth, to others reality. Until now, Panaka had never held an opinion either way.

The monster lay in an agonizing still life. Foam broke over its submerged rear flippers. Its forelimbs, long and hooked, lay quietly near the deep furrows they had earlier carved into the sand. The snake-like neck was twisted like a corkscrew, leaving the head—the size of a house—inverted in a classic pose of death. The monster's mouth gaped open, startlingly white teeth shining like great slabs of salt.

Abruptly the monster moved. Shuddering, it heaved over and flopped down on its stomach with a tremendous thud. A gaggle of startled seabirds took to the sky.

The monster rolled its head around as if searching for the sun. Puddled water sloughed off its back in thin rivulets. Its haunch muscles spasmed, and far out to sea Panaka saw an answering splash as a tailfin breached the surface with a slap. Its claws scrabbled weakly in the grooves they had already gouged out, and then the *sando aqua monstrosus* collapsed with a rattling roar.

Panaka didn't know how long he'd been standing there. But

the swollen orange sun was already dipping behind the ocean's perfect horizon.

Panaka began clambering down the inner slope, eyes straining for safe footholds and signs that someone else had passed this way. The way down was even more hazardous than the ascension, for the rocks along the basin's inner wall were slick with seaspray.

Halfway down, he paused. Panaka took his eyes off his feet for a moment and squinted at the sand surrounding the monster. If the fugitive crossed that open stretch Panaka might be able to pin him down with long-range blaster fire. But even as the thought entered his mind, Panaka boggled at the absurdity of it all. What was the runner doing down here? Did he hope to lose Panaka in the vicinity of the body? He's panicking, reasoned Panaka.

Panaka didn't see anyone crossing the expanse. He did, however, notice that the sand covering the floor of the basin did not extend all the way up to the foot of the slope. There, amid agglomerations of rocks that had tumbled to the bottom over centuries of waves and wind, dark black cavities punctured the crust. Deeper than any shadow, they looked like yawning mouths beckoning him into the underworld.

Panaka was reminded of the unnavigable honeycomb passages that riddled Naboo. The entire planet was like a melon gnawed hollow by a colony of hungry worms. Rock tunnels run underneath this whole stretch of coast, he thought. If he's gone in that warren I might never find him.

As if spurred by Panaka's unspoken pessimism, a white-garbed figure appeared below from behind a rock, silhouetted against one of the openings like a ghost.

Panaka unholstered his blaster. "Hold!" he shouted, and fired a shot into the air. The figure whipped around and looked up at him, but the distance and darkness were too great to make out any identifying features. "Hold!" Panaka shouted again.

The figure paused as if deliberating its options, then took a step into the gaping tunnel mouth. It fell straight down and disappeared in an eyelink.

Panaka jammed his blaster back in its holster and scrambled the rest of the way down the slope. He slowed as he neared the tunnel mouth. His target, down in the darkness below, was shielded by shadow and could probably take him down with a single shot.

But Panaka was also apprehensive for less tangible reasons. Despite his training and his natural disdain for superstition, the idea of jumping feet-first into stygian blackness was downright unnerving. And to traverse the cold channels directly underneath the belly of a dying behemoth represented fear in its most primal shape. Panaka leapt into the unseen abyss.

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Panaka landed with a splash, blaster held tightly in his right fist. Immediately, he tucked into a ball and rolled to his left. But he heard nothing, and as his eyes adjusted he saw he was alone in a small rock chamber with a single exit.

Or was he? Along the weeping walls he saw several pale glowing orbs, each the size of his head. The dead clouded eyes clung to the rock and made sticky puckering noises as they focused on him.

Panaka had no idea what manner of creatures they were, but they disgusted him for reasons he could not explain.

A stricken bellow rumbled down through the entrance in the ceiling. The monster slapped some extremity against the sand overhead and the walls of the chamber reverberated. As if jolted from sleep, dozens more eye-creatures revealed themselves, uncovering their phosphorescent bodies one after the other with the wet sucking sounds of nursing babies. Panaka shuddered and ducked his head as he passed into the tunnel beyond.

The light from the orb-creatures dimmed quickly in the tight passage. Panaka considered switching on his field luma, but didn't want to destroy his night vision or paint too obvious a target for his quarry. He moved forward gingerly, testing the ground with each step.

A thin film of water covered the rock floor. Given their negative elevation relative to sea level Panaka had half expected these passages to be completely flooded.

The standing water made it impossible to scan for footprints. Panaka froze, halting his breathing, and heard the distant echo of splashing footfalls. He also heard a faint mechanical hum. A pump?

By this point he was in total darkness. As he reached for his luma with his free hand, he noticed a pallid glow far ahead. The light was encouraging, but between there and here could lurk overhanging stalactites or ankle-twisting pits. Risky as it was, he needed a quick snapshot of the terrain ahead. Left thumb poised over the kill switch, Panaka activated his luma.

A whistling shriek erupted from behind him, like steam squealing out of a burst pipe. Something struck Panaka between the shoulder blades and knocked the luma from his fingers. It splashed in the shallow water and winked out, dousing the tunnel in darkness once more. Panaka waved his blaster around blindly.

A second thing, hard and cold, smacked against his neck and nipped at the skin with needle-sharp teeth. Panaka slapped the creature away, but dozens more struck his face, his chest, his hands, his hair. Panaka stumbled ahead, brushing the nightmares away with clumsy sweeps of his forearms. Shrill hoots reverberated in the claustrophobic tunnel, unnerving and disorienting Panaka. His knee thumped a spur of rock and he tumbled, whacking his head against the ground with such force he saw stars. Panaka crawled forward, half aware, striking for the light.

Unseen creatures piled on his back, munching through the leather tunic and hanging on two and three deep, as if they were all trying to ride a kando. Panaka slouched through the water, lurching forward on his hands and knees.

Dimly, Panaka saw that he had entered the illuminated tunnel. Weak as the light was, it seemed to be an abhorrence to the tiny biters. The hard-shelled creatures hissed and sprang off Panaka's back. With the clatter of a skeleton in a rock tumbler, they quickly hopped back into the blackness.

Shaking his head to clear it, Panaka lifted himself up from the

floor and felt the cold pressure of a blaster barrel on the back of his skull.

"Hands up," came a harsh male voice. "And drop your blaster. You make me twitch, you lose your head."

Panaka did as he was ordered.

"Turn around," commanded the voice.

Panaka turned slowly and regarded his captor. Bald and paunchy, but with obvious muscles beneath the fat, the man was a good head taller than Panaka. His puffy face was dominated by a knob of a nose that looked as if it had been broken and reset many times without benefit of bacta. His baggy white clothing, stained with sand and sweat, draped loosely over his ample frame.

The man didn't lower the disruptor.

Carefully, Panaka laced his fingers behind his head. "You planning to use that?" He nodded toward the other man's weapon.

"Not unless you do something stupid. Thought the way you handled yourself with those biters I already know you're not too bright."

Panaka didn't take the bait. "Whatever your intentions are down here, holding a Royal Security Force officer at gunpoint isn't going to make your situation any easier."

"Watch it, Lieutenant," the man sneered. "Your partner isn't here to cover your back. I could shoot you right here for what you did to Kroke Modbom."

Panaka started at the name, then thought back to that morning's confrontation and Bialy's unseen shooter. "Kroke was a Gungan criminal," he answered smoothly. "Tell me what you are."

The look that crossed the man's face combined both disgust and pity. "Lieutenant, we're all criminals. Thank goodness we have officers like you to keep Naboo safe in the name of our king."

The cry of the sand aqua monster resounded through the meters of rock above them, much louder this time and laden with low-thrumming bass notes as if most of the monster's call was below the threshold of hearing. Panaka felt the vibration through his boots.

As the noise died away, a powerful thud nearly knocked Panaka off his feet. The monster was thrashing. Sand—or perhaps pulverized rock—rickled down on his head through cracks in the tunnel ceiling.

The heavyset man glanced up anxiously. Panaka tensed, preparing to take advantage of the distraction, but his captor looked back quickly and shook his head in warning. "Uh-uh." He gestured with the disruptor. "Turn around and walk forward. Slowly." More rock powder spilled down from above in dry streams, making powdery cones in the shallow water. "But don't drag your feet. I wouldn't bet on this tunnel holding forever."

Panaka wondered how he was supposed to do both those things simultaneously, but kept quiet. "What's your name?" he asked instead.

"I'm called Veermok," the man barked, and punctuated the statement by jabbing Panaka's back with the disruptor pistol. "Start walking."

"HANDS UP," CAME A HARSH MALE VOICE. "AND DROP YOUR BLASTER. YOU MAKE ME TWITCH. YOU LOSE YOUR HEAD."

snap bone. "The Gungan give you that name?" he asked as he moved forward into the steadily brightening light.

The other man's voice conveyed loathing. "Let me hazard a guess, lieutenant—you've spent more time riding in turbolifts than talking to Gungans. And I dare you to tell me otherwise." He paused as he picked up Panaka's S-5 from the floor. "You know nothing about Gungans, and you know even less about Kroke."

"I know he was a wanted criminal. What does that say about you? I can't imagine. You tell me."

Panaka shrugged. "You know the saying. 'Veermoks run in packs.' Not a wise thing to say to a man with a pistol at your back."

"That's not the way I see it." Panaka wiggled his fingers inside his leather gloves. "You had me dead to rights a minute ago. I think if you were going to kill me, you would have done it already."

The man gave a wintry laugh. "Lieutenant, you have no idea what we're doing down here, do you?"

"I know what I'm doing here," Panaka answered confidently.

They had advanced into the full light of the new tunnel. Panaka saw his earlier suspicions confirmed. Banks of artificial illuminators hung from the rock ceiling at even intervals. At least a dozen lit up the tunnel ahead before the passage bent into a distant turn. Panaka still saw no evidence of a pump, but the underlying hum of machinery was obvious. Grated metal deck-plates on the floor covered the few centimeters of dirty water that puddled underfoot.

Dark alcoves in the walls ahead indicated the presence of branching shafts. As Panaka passed the first of these subsidiary passages, he noticed it was blocked with a heavy durasteel door bearing a number in futhark script.

"Slow down," the man ordered. "Walk forward carefully, one step at a time, I'll be standing right back here." Panaka heard the familiar click of his blaster's intensity setting. "And remember, now I've got two pistols trained on you."

Panaka's gut went cold. "You think the tunnel's boobytrapped?" "Points for the lieutenant. Maybe you officers aren't all dense."

"So if I don't advance, I get shot in the back. If I do advance, I trigger an automated intruder device and get shot in the chest. So tell me again why you think I should help you."

"Oh, come now, lieutenant," his captor mocked. "All that Security Force training and you can't defeat a simple ambush? Move. Now. We're wasting time."

Panaka flexed his hands. He was never more conscious of the missing weight of his S-5. He stepped forward carefully, boots echoing hollowly on the deckplates. On the walls, hundreds of tiny fungus buds created giddy pointillist patterns in phosphorescent green. Hairy roots ran along the face of the stone, crisscrossing the pale fungus-like networks of blood vessels. Panaka passed several

more tributary tunnels off to either side, some capped with doors and others disappearing into darkness.

"Mind telling me what I'm looking for?" Panaka eyed a numbered deer warily.

"What do you think this place is? What does your Royal Security Force training tell you?"

Panaka craned his neck to look behind a hanging bank of overhead lights. An observation cam stared blankly back at him through its single lens. Corroded and dripping, the cam's electronics had obviously lost the battle against the tunnel's ubiquitous moisture. "A pirate's stash," Panaka answered. "A bootlegger's warehouse."

"What if I told you this was commissioned by King Veruna? That it contains records concerning corruption at the highest levels of government? Records that would shock even you?"

Panaka snorted. "I wouldn't think much. You see whatever you want to see. You're not the only anti-royalist on Naboo."

"Anti-royalist?" the man spat. "We're not out there carrying signs. Kroke and I and the others, we're fighting for Naboo."

"Then I've never heard of you."

"I'm glad. We're not striving to be noticed. We're not even an organization. We have no leader, no hierarchy. But when your

friends start disappearing, people have a funny way of working together." He paused, then continued in a lower register, his words wrapped around a lump of sadness. "The Gungans were here before us. They can tell when their world is out of balance. All my life I've tried to sense that balance. Now we have the chance to restore it."

Veermok sighed as if casting off a great weight. "So no, Lieutenant, we're not anti-royalist. We're anti-lies. Anti-secrets."

Panaka felt a smile at the corners of his mouth. Idealist. "That's what everyone wants," he said, keeping his voice calm and reasonable. "Including Veruna. Including me."

"You mean well, Lieutenant, but you're a liar." Veermok's voice boiled with heated bitterness. "Kroke and I have been looking for a repository like this one for years. Recent information led us to Port Laniken, but we couldn't find it on our own. Naboo understood. The planet herself finally revealed this disease by sending the sand-aqua monster. I am honored to accept her gift. If you're really sincere about wanting the truth, help me search. Help me make public whatever we find."

"Put down the pistols and we'll talk about it."

"Lieutenant, maybe I am a little naive, but I've never been called stupid. Now stop stalling."

Panaka left the dead cam behind and reached another matched pair of branching tunnels. The passage to his right was capped by a door that read "WASTE STORAGE" in faded red printing. The tributary on his left stretched off into darkness. Peering closely into that gloom, Panaka thought he could make out the circular outline of a wide hole in the rock floor. Worried what the pit might conceal, Panaka sprang forward onto the deckplates a meter ahead and

dropped to the ground as a ceiling illumination bank exploded in a shower of sparks, spitting out an energy bolt that hissed past Panaka's ear. The wrecked lighting rig fell to the ground with a crash, revealing a recessed laser turret in the ceiling. With a hyperactive whine the turret spun around in dizzy circles, spraying destructive energy everywhere. Panaka hurried backward on his belly, outside of the turret's apparent range, back to the intersection of the two branching tunnels.

His captor moved up behind him. "What did you do?"

"Draconi fixed defensive laser," Panaka stated flatly. "Can't tell if it's pressure or motion activated, so keep still."

The turret spun around madly in its tight circle, drenching the air with missiles of hot orange energy. Laser darts peppered the walls of the tunnel, leaving rows of black smoking holes, then burned over the heads of the two figures lying prone on the deckplates.

"I don't know," Panaka admitted, shouting over the sizzle. "I'd expect this one to track us, and it's not. It's old. And I think it's malfunctioning." Like an airspeeder caught in a fatal spiral, the laser twirled around faster with each revolution. The turret mounting wobbled violently with the off-center stress. The laser's circular spray pattern now began to zigzag up and down the walls, in sync with the back-and-forth jerking of the pivot mount. Panaka gritted his teeth. Then he noticed that the rock surrounding the ceiling turret was glowing.

Plasota. Veins of natural energy plasma gushed deep through the core of Naboo. These were tapped with drilled shafts to generate power for major cities. Trace amounts of plasma sometimes permeated surface rock, useless for any practical purpose but fun to ignite for a short-lived light show. The out-of-control turret likely ran on its own plasma source, and was venting its excess heat directly into the saturated rock. The rock itself was unlikely to explode, but as the ceiling's temperature climbed the motor casing would melt, exposing its pure plasma battery to direct heat. And when that happened—

"We're moving!" Panaka announced to his captor. "That laser's going to blow."

The man glared back at him. A pattern of dirt smudged one side of his face where he'd pressed it against the grated deckplate. "You're not going anywhere." He still held both pistols tightly in his fists.

"Take a look!" Panaka jerked his head toward the turret, angry. Vivid white lines spiderwebbed through the superheated red rock. Panaka peered into the branching tunnel on their left, where he'd earlier glimpsed a dark pit. "When the laser spins that way—" he motioned opposite their position—"we roll left, and scoot down that tunnel as far as we can." Panaka held up his hand. "On my signal, One—"

Panaka never finished his count as the world came crumbling down on them. He was flipped end-over-end, swept up in a jumble of rocks that banged him from every side. Time slowed down as Panaka became acutely conscious of his surroundings, in a sort of hyperconsciousness that intruded upon his senses in life-or-death situations.

He was in the air, spinning, falling. Yet there was no fire from an explosion. The laser turret hadn't blown. Above him he saw rocks large and small, suspended in the air in mid-tumble like himself. Beyond the rocks he saw a ragged patch of purple dotted with pin-

prick stars. Silhouetted against the incongruous night sky was a massive claw with talons the size of tree trunks, reaching deep into the ground as if digging for worms.

He hadn't been blown off his feet. He'd been scooped.

Panaka flailed his arms, trying to grab hold of something, anything to break his inevitable fall. As he twisted his body in mid-air he saw the rock floor rushing up at him. Panaka landed hard on his forearms. His legs sailed up and over, flipping him on his back and sending him into a dusty slide toward the ominous pit in the floor of the tributary tunnel. Panaka reached desperately for one of the dangling, hair-like roots that draped over the lip of the pit, but it was too late. He fell down into blackness, then plunged feet-first into a film of icy water that swiftly closed over his head.

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With a shuddering gasp, Panaka broke the surface, trying desperately to stay afloat as his sodden clothing threatened to drag him back under. Rocks and chunks of debris continued to rain down from on high, punching the water around him with loud splashes. Next to him Panaka saw a huge rectangle list over and begin to sink; with a start, Panaka saw it was the opposite tributary tunnel's door, WASTE STORAGE, which had been completely torn from its hinges.

Panaka kicked off his boots and silently cursed whomever had designed the Royal Security Force uniform to include a knee-length fabric skirt and a heavy leather vest. Treading water as he shed his gloves, Panaka stared up at the rim of the pit high above him.

Veermok dangled over the edge, his legs kicking uselessly. One hand was gripping some purchase outside the pit; the other was holding Panaka's S-5. Obviously unwilling to drop the weapon, yet unable to pull himself up one-handed, the radical dangled in the air helplessly before finally letting go of the blaster and swinging his free arm up to secure a better handhold.

The pistol fell straight down, Panaka sloshed over, hoping to catch it, but it broke the surface with a plop and sank out of sight. Panaka drew a deep breath and dove beneath the water, paddling furiously. The icy water induced a tightness in his chest. Visibility was zero, but through luck or providence Panaka brushed against the dropping blaster with his frozen fingers. Clasping it eagerly in both hands, he kicked for the surface.

Near the surface, Panaka shoved a floating obstacle out of his way. Then he gasped for air once more. Veermok no longer hung from the edge of the pit.

Panaka reached out for the floating object he'd just jostled, hoping to use it as a life preserver while he examined the S-5. The floater was two meters long, roughly cylindrical. He threw his arms over it and it dipped under the water in response. Panaka turned his head toward the object's closest end.

A vacant-eyed rictus grinned back at him.

It had once been a Gungan, before the body had swelled and rotted. The eyestalks were gone, leaving only black sockets peering out from a skull. Rubbery flesh stretched tight over the snout, peeling away from two rows of blackened, grimacing teeth. Two fanlike ears floated on the surface of the water, though with the skin eaten away the cartilaginous webbing looked like long-fingered hands.

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pointing in opposite directions.

Splashing away from the body in disgust, Panaka bumped into something.

behind him. He twisted around and saw a second body, this one human. Its stomach bulged with gas and its mouth gaped open in a soundless scream. The bile rose in Panaka's throat as he realized he'd swallowed the same water the seeping corpses were bobbing in. As he spat out his saliva, he saw at least a half-dozen other floating forms.

Panaka groped on his belt for the durasteel grappling hook. Finding it, he fitted it to the barrel of his S-5. Kicking hard to keep from dipping underwater, he raised the pistol with both hands and aimed straight up, past the rim of the pit, up to the rock ceiling of the tunnel itself. Squeezing the trigger, he fired the liquid-cable shooter.

A thin line of spray mist unspooled from the blaster, trailing the grappling hook like a strand of chloropede silk. It hardened into unbreakable wire the instant it touched the air. The grappling hook hit the roof of the tunnel with a thunk, its sharp tines biting deeply into the stone. Panaka thumbed the retract control.

Motors within the device whined as they pulled the line back into the S-5's tiny reservoir. Panaka held tightly to the pistol stock with both hands. As the S-5 climbed the cable he was lifted clear, water running off his clothing in great tunnels.

Panaka halted the ascension once he had cleared the hole in the floor, with a couple of meters left on the line. He needed to gain enough lateral momentum to reach the edge of the pit. He began swinging back and forth, causing the grappling hook to rock in the stone overhead. As Panaka finished a long backward arc he raised both feet, prepared to jump to safety at the end of the return arc. As he passed the midpoint of the swing the grappling hook popped loose.

Panaka fell, but inertia still carried him to the lip of the pit. He hit the edge hard, knocking the breath from his lungs, but succeeded in wrapping one arm around a hairy root before he slid backward. Panaka pulled himself up to secure ground. Panting with fatigue, he retracted the remainder of the liquid cable and the dangling grappling hook.

Panaka stood and ran back toward the main tunnel, back to where the sando aqua-monster had dug through from the outside world. His uniform felt like a suit of cold, slapping armor as it leaked water onto his bare feet. As Panaka got closer to the site of the breach, the gray darkness of the underground passages began to give way to the pure indigo of Naboo's night sky.

The monster suddenly howled and slipped its snake-like bulk against the surface above. The tunnel vibrated like a struck drum-head. Panaka stumbled, off-balance, and drove his left heel into the point of a low stalagmite. Loose stone showered from the ceiling. From out in the main tunnel Panaka heard a cry of surprise. Favoring his right leg in a grotesque limp, Panaka tumbled out into the opening, blaster pistol at the ready.

The main tunnel was utter devastation, as if it had been shattered by a pressure bomb. Panaka still couldn't believe he'd been standing at ground zero. Several tons of stone, most of it crumbled into shaak-sized boulders, littered the floor of what had once been a tunnel, though now that a chunk of the roof was missing Panaka

supposed it was more like a trench. Straight up, through the hole above, he could see the constellation Beaurité winking from behind a shivering, heaving mass that was likely some part of the monster's shoulder.

The monster's claw had scooped away a mountain of broken stone, leaving two rocky heaps on opposite sides to mark its passing. One pile completely blocked the route Panaka and his captor had traversed at the start of their exploration. The other pile clogged the tunnel ahead where the amok laser turret had once stood guard. From the other side of this jumbled roadblock came muffled grunts and curses.

Throwing himself on the stone barrier, Panaka clambered up and peered over the top. Below him, Veermok had just freed himself from an avalanche of plate-sized flecks.

"Hold!" Panaka shouted. Veermok looked up, startled, and started running. He no longer had his disruptor. Panaka threw himself over the summit and slid down to the pebbly floor. He winced as he landed on his punctured heel. "Veermok! I'm telling you, hold!"

The other man didn't stop. Panaka aimed through the S-5's primary sight at Veermok's right knee and pulled the trigger.

The S-5 gave a nasty pop and released a drizzle of sparks like a cheap-party favor. Panaka hissed as he realized that the dip in the icy water had gutted the blaster's electronics.

Veermok looked back. His voice was loud and mocking. "Problems, lieutenant? I'm sorry to see that." The intact tunnel ahead of him was spottily lit by the remaining illuminators. Past that, an upsloping turn led to the highest-numbered doors – and to freedom. "You're obviously in no shape to run me down, so I'm afraid this is where we part ways. I hope we meet again under better circumstances." Veermok gave a flippant salute. "See you soon." He broke into an easy run.

Panaka made a minute adjustment to his S-5, aimed again, and fired.

The liquid cable shot forth like a streak of white light. The teeth of the durasteel grappling hook bit through Veermok's tunic and into the thick muscle below his right shoulderblade. He tripped and fell forward with a grunt.

Panaka braced his good foot against a sturdy chunk of rock and hit the S-5's retract control.

The line pulled taut, flipping Veermok on his back. Slowly but inevitably it withdrew into the firing chamber. Veermok flailed like a hooked fish as he was dragged backward across the floor, but the cable towed the weight with mechanical efficiency.

When the cable had almost retracted, Panaka placed his foot on the other man's chest. "Sooner than you think."

Panaka flipped Veermok over on his stomach. Pulling the grappling hook free, Panaka pinned the man's arms with one hand while reaching for the Security Force wrist binders on his belt with the other.

In a last, desperate move, Veermok threw his head and shoulders up in a convulsive arch like a prisoner undergoing electrocution. The back of his head impacted squarely with Panaka's bandaged nose. Panaka grunted in pain and his hands went reflexively to his face. Taking advantage of the half-second distraction, Veermok wriggled forward and was on his feet before Panaka could stop him. He took

off down the tunnel at top speed.

"Veermok! Don't do this!" Panaka aimed his S-5, grappling hook ready to fire.

The tunnel suddenly lit up like a pulsar, stinging Panaka's eyes. The accompanying CRACK was chased by rumbling echoes up and down the corridor walls. Veermok stood frozen in place, a smoking black hole in his back. Panaka stared dumbly down at his S-5, knowing he couldn't possibly have fired.

Veermok didn't crumple but instead fell straight backward like a chopped tree. His body hit the ground with a shallow splash, revealing another figure in the tunnel beyond. Sate Pestage strode forward, blaster in hand.

Panaka maneuvered to the stricken man's side. The blaster shot had gone straight through the chest as if bored with a drill. It had not fully cauterized. The blood was red and thick, oozing slowly from the wound's shredded edges.

"Help me!" Panaka demanded of Pestage, cleaning flecks of ash away from the injury. "It's venous bleeding, not arterial. He still has a chance." Pestage walked closer but did not move to help.

Panaka glared up at him. "Why did you shoot? I had him!"

Pestage looked back coldly. For the first time, Panaka noticed the large lockbox he carried under his arm. "You needed help, Lieutenant. We got your call." He nodded at the prone body. "And you got your man."

Panaka located where the vein met the bone and placed two fingers against the blood vessel, pinching off the principal hemorrhage. The heart was still pumping but Veermok wasn't breathing.

"Get back to the surface," Panaka snapped. "Comlink Theed. And bring me a medkit." Bending down, he placed his mouth over Veermok's and filled his quiet lungs with air.

Pestage remained where he was. "Too late for that."

The wet throbbing against Panaka's fingers suddenly ceased as if someone inside had thrown a tiny switch. With the sound of a punctured air tank, the breath escaped through Veermok's slack lips as his lungs collapsed. Panaka saw Veermok's eyes unfocus as if he were looking through the tunnel ceiling at the heavens beyond, and then he was gone.

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The moon Ohma-D'un stood high in the sky, casting her pale brown light on the sea's rippling skin and the churning breakers below. Panaka stood on a rocky cliff overlooking the ocean. Behind him, on the road to Port Landien, clustered a half-dozen Royal Security Force speeders, their flashing signals spotlighting his own wrecked speeder strapped to the bed of a recovery floatcar. On the grass, Sergeant Bialy and the other officers were undergoing debriefing.

Panaka set his jaw as he prepared to answer Captain Magneta. "I'm not convinced, Captain. The evidence warrants further investigation. What Pestage did was illegal and indicative of a cover-up."

diplomatic immunity or no?"

"I'm the head of the Royal Security Forces, lieutenant," Magneta answered dryly. She wore a look of weary resignation. "I shouldn't have to convince you of anything." Magneta glanced back over her shoulder toward the distant tower of rock that sheltered the monster's cove.

"But the bodies. Human and Gungan." Panaka massaged the damp fabric of his uniform to rub some warmth into his shoulders. "Eight bodies, possibly more."

"Regurgitated by the monster. Perhaps it couldn't stomach its final meal."

Panaka suppressed a sigh. "I don't think so."

"It's happened before, with species. You know that. You have bodies and you have a sea monster. A connection is not a coincidence."

"I realize that," Panaka admitted. "But those bodies were rotted, not digested."

Magneta looked at him sharply. "Killed by a pirate. Stashed underground so no one would find them."

Panaka crossed his arms. "There's something down there. A complex. The revolutionary claimed it was built by King Veruna, but I suspect it's offworld in origin. Pestage removed a box of evidence from the scene. He killed a witness who might have known the truth. Those bodies—more of the same. The revolutionary spoke of 'missing friends.' We should run forensics right away."

Captain Magneta's eyes flickered with obvious distraction, but Panaka plowed on. "If you're right, and it is a pirate, then Pestage is a knowing participant. He could be protecting his financial stake in an illegal Naboo operation."

"What are you suggesting, Lieutenant?"

"I'd like to place Sate Pestage under arrest."

Magneta nodded. "I'll take it under advisement." Her tone was quiet but dismissive.

"And I'd like to inform Veruna and Senator Palpatine," Panaka continued, narrowing his eyes. "This Coruscanti assassin is not a person they want to associate with."

"Enough. That will be my responsibility, not yours."

Panaka gave a clenched-jaw scowl.

Magneta looked absently out toward Ohma-D'un. Panaka followed her gaze, but his eyes caught upon something in the sky directly behind her. The moon's light glinted unnaturally against a faraway speck of metal above the tidal basin. Panaka knew it could only be an N-1 starfighter.

"You worry too much, Lieutenant," Magneta reassured, placing one hand on her throat.

Two needles of red issued from the distant starfighter. A bloom of orange fire burgeoned up behind the rock wall and spilled angrily over the side, as if reaching hungrily for the distant observers.

"It's all being taken care of." ■

A Legacy of Starships

BY OWEN K. C. STEPHENS · ILLUSTRATED BY JEFF CARLISLE

The Corellian Engineering Corporation is one of the oldest manufacturers of small starships in the known galaxy. Their history dates back to the early days of the Old Republic, when captains of small ships were often the only ones willing to risk travelling through unknown regions of hyperspace, mapping out safe routes through star systems and gas clouds. Many of those ships were Corellian designs, and the Corellian Engineering Corporation was formed by a consortium of Corellia's best designers and shipbuilders. As the galaxy became tamer and more thoroughly explored, other companies and shipyards moved on to pure military contracts building starfighters and capitol ships of war. Although a few successful capitol class ships have come from Corellian Engineering, such as the Corellian Corvette, the company's primary focus has remained small, mostly civilian ships. In every era of the Star Wars game, from the early days of the Republic, through the Rise of the Empire and the Rebellion, all the way to the New Jedi Order, Corellian ships are designed, built and modified to suit the needs of independent operators and small companies.

YG Series

The YG series of ships dates back to the early centuries of galactic exploration. Most were built-to-order, specialty ships constructed for specific purposes. Many were transports and freighters, but some were exploration craft. The modular design that marks all later Corellian ships began with the YG series. Each ship was designed to be endlessly refitted and modified by a long string of owners. Although the last YGs came off the production lines centuries ago, a very few are still functional, having been rebuilt and refurbished dozens of times. None of these ships match their original specifications anymore, but they are still identifiable as stout Corellian vessels. An example of an old YG ship is presented below.

The Aeon Ranger

The Aeon Ranger is an extremely old ship with the hull of a YG-4210 and the engines of a YG-5000. It has been modified on scores of occasions, and bears parts taken from hundreds of ships and scrap yards. No one knows what it was originally designed to do, but the Aeon Ranger is now a well balanced, independent small ship capable of acting as a small transport, a military scout, a bounty hunter's personal craft or even a patrol ship (and in fact has been used for most of those purposes). Though slow by modern standards, the Aeon Ranger is remarkably maneuverable, and grants anyone flying it a +4 equipment bonus to all Pilot checks. It is extremely resilient, and has a thoroughly modern sensor system that grants users a +2 equipment bonus to Computer Use checks when actively scanning. Its compartments are roomy and comfortable, a hold over from a more opulent time in space travel. Its weapon selection is fairly standard, with the exception of the "escape missile," a single heavy concussion missile with a rear-facing arc.

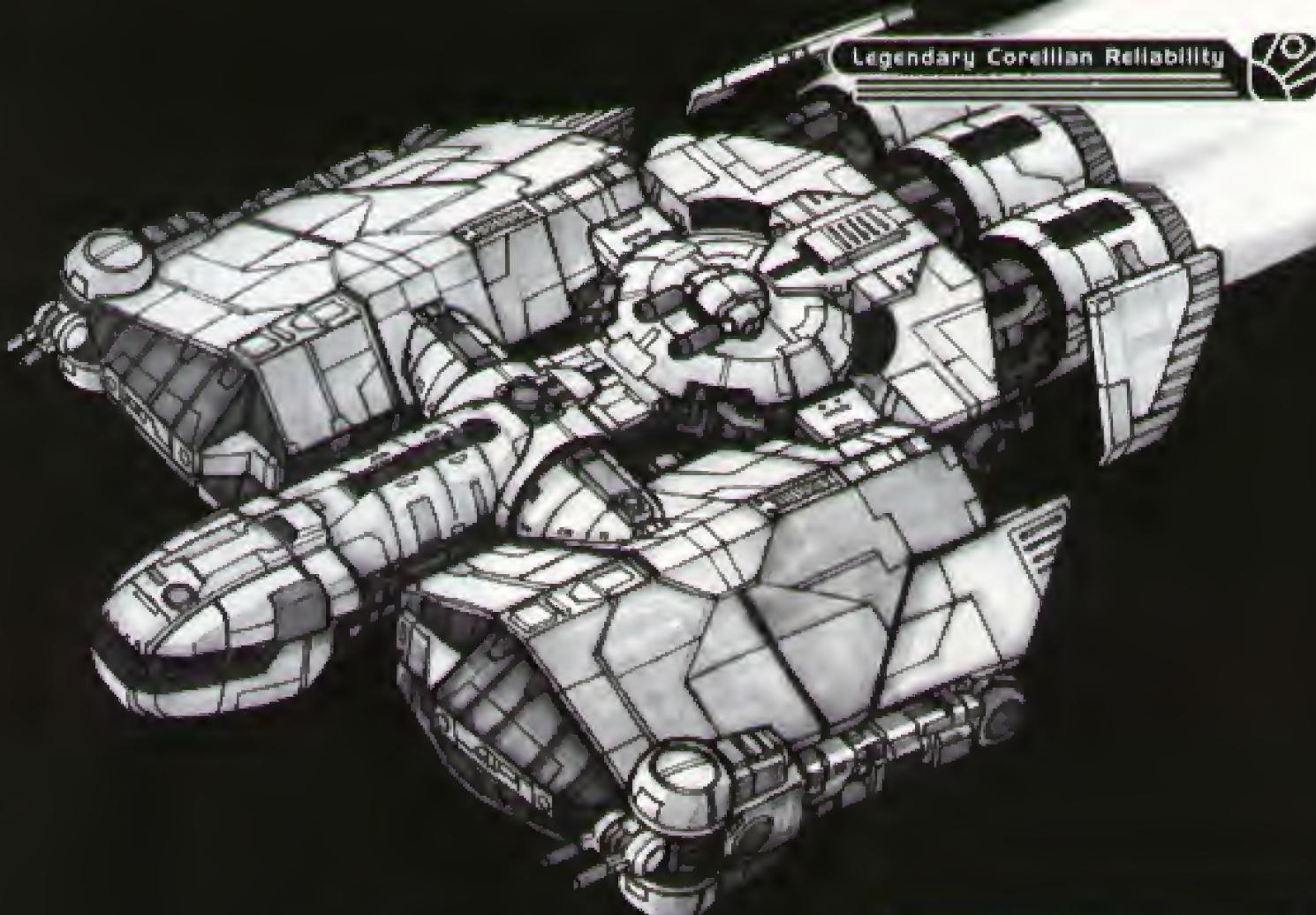
Weapon:	Blaster cannons x2 fixed
Fire arc:	Partial turret: front, right, left
Attack Bonus:	+5 vs. star, +6 vs. ship, +4 vs. ground
Damage:	4d10 x3
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

Craft:	Modified YG-4210
Class:	Transport
Cost:	40,000 credit
Size:	Small
Crews:	4 Normal +0
Passengers:	12
Cargo Capacity:	10 metric tons
Consumables:	1 year
Hyperdrives:	x3
Max Speed:	Cruising
Defense:	21 (+10%, +10% armor)
Shield Points:	60
Hull Points:	210
DR:	10

Weapons:	Light ion cannons : fire linked
Fire arc:	Turret
Attack Bonus:	+7 vs. star, +6 vs. ship, +4 vs. ground
Damage:	Special
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

Weapons:	Heavy concussion missile launchers : fire linked
Fire arc:	Rear
Attack Bonus:	+10 vs. star, +8 vs. ship, +6 vs. ground
Damage:	9d10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S/M/L n/a





YU-410 Light Freighter

YU Series

Shortly after the 1300 model proved to be such a success, the Corellian Engineering Corporation tried to improve upon their success with the larger and more extensive YU series. Unfortunately, part of the great success of other Corellian series has always been their extremely modular and modifiable nature, which the entire YU series lacks. The ships appealed to small businesses as they were designed to, but were not the ships of choice for people looking to make some changes or improvements. The YU series ships were also slow and ungainly, making them inappropriate for trips through dangerous systems. The most common YU series ship, the YU-410, is presented above.

Craft:	YU-410 Light Freighter
Class:	Transport
Cost:	200,000 - 80,000 cred
Size:	Small spanning
Crew:	4+4 gunners, normal +1
Passengers:	12
Cargo Capacity:	250 metric tons
Consumables:	3 months
Hyperdrive:	x2 hyper cu
Max Speed:	Cruising
Defenses:	21+10 size, +10 armor
Shield Points:	0
Hull Points:	140
DR:	10

Weapons:	Double laser cannons (4)
Fire arc:	2 in turrets, 1 in partial turret front, right 1 in partial turret front, left
Attack Bonus:	+9 vs size, +8 crew, +0 fire control
Damager:	ad10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

The 410 is the best known and most popular of all the YU series freighters. Almost twice as big as a YT-1300 and with more than double the cargo capacity, the double-hulled 410 is very popular among small transport companies and independent merchants. It can manage much longer trips, thanks to its well-appointed state rooms, and has a little extra space for entertainment computers, droids and personal recreation. For its stated purpose of helping small, legitimate companies make long hauls of large shipments, it is very well suited.

The 410 was the most heavily armed of the YU series, with 2 double laser turrets mounted one above and two below and two partially turreted double laser cannons mounted left and right. But this armament stretched the 410's power supply and internal bracing to the limit, and it was unable to support any extra weapons. With only a limited market appeal, the 410 was only produced in limited numbers, and is mostly restricted to cargo companies located in the core of the galaxy.

YT Series

The YT series of transports and small freighters is among the most popular lines of starships ever built. The venerable YT-1300, already old during the Rise of the Empire era, is a staple of many small trading houses' fleets as well as being popular among smugglers and independent merchants. The modular nature of the 1300 made conversions easy, and some refurbished 1300s bear little resemblance to their original forms. By the time of the New Jedi Order era, very few YT-1300s can be found that still look the part. Other YT models may never have gained the vast acceptance of the YT-1300, but remain fairly common sights in space docks throughout the galaxy. Examples of a modified YT-1300 and a different YT model are presented below.

Courageous

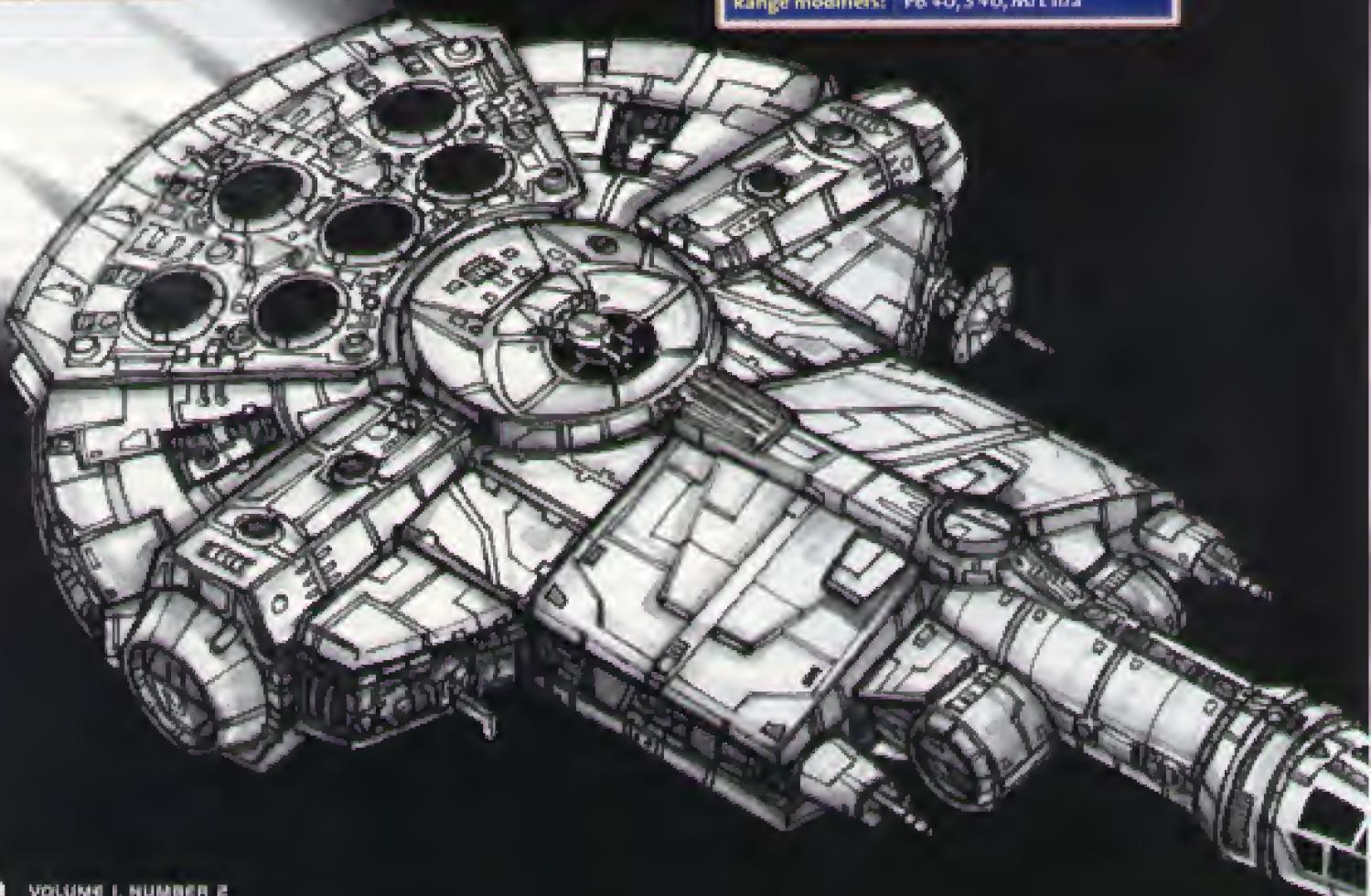
The *Courageous* is a heavily modified YT-1300 that has been owned by pirates, planetary defense forces and even a bounty hunter. It underwent massive overhaul shortly after coming off the assembly line during the time of Supreme Chancellor Valorum's leadership of the Old Republic. It has been modified several times since, and the stats presented below are just one common configuration for this ship.

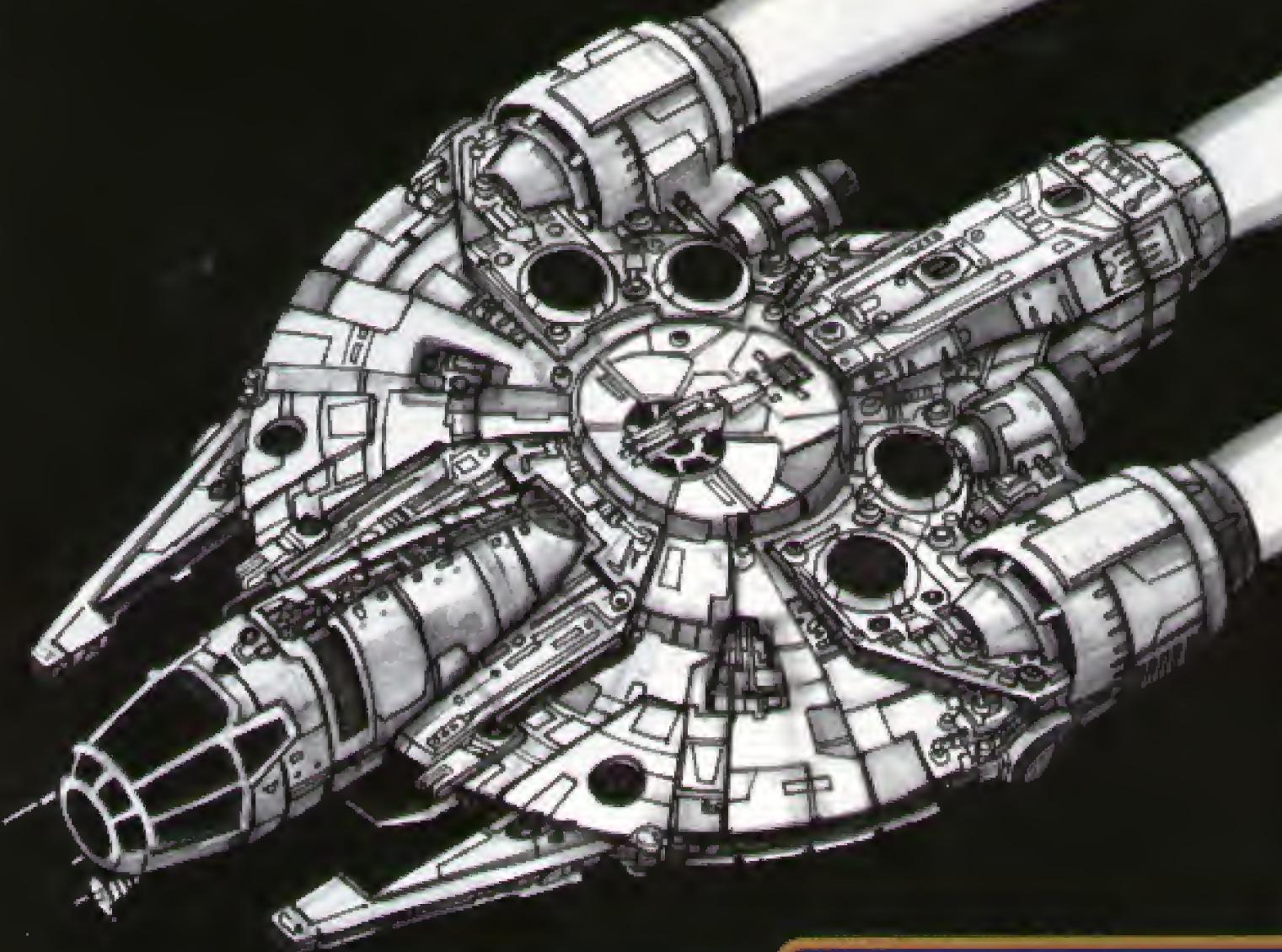
The *Courageous* is designed to be a vessel of war. It has sacrificed most of its cargo capacity for additional power generators for its numerous guns and powerful shields. The entire front half of the *Courageous* has been rebuilt to reinforce its keel and spine. This allows the ship to mount two massive turbolasers taken off a Nebulon-B frigate, the massive capacitors required to power them consume almost all the ship's available space. The ship's other weapons have changed with almost every owner, but a double laser cannon in a topside turret mount is reasonably standard. Unlike most transports converted for military use, the *Courageous* has no concussion missile launchers or proton torpedo tubes, having used too much space for the heavy turbolasers.

Craft:	Modified YT-1300
Class:	Transport
Cost:	Likely valued at 150,000
Size:	Small
Crew:	2+2 gunners (Normal +2)
Passenger:	2
Cargo Capacity:	2 metric tons
Consumables:	1 month
Hyperdrives:	x3 (backup x12)
Max Speeds:	Attack
Defenses:	21 + value, no armor
Shield Points:	30
Hull Points:	150
DR:	10

Weapon:	Heavy turbolasers (2)
Fire arc:	Front
Attack Bonus:	+7 + size, +2 crew, +4 fire control
Damage:	4d10 x5

Weapon:	Double laser cannon
Fire arc:	Turret
Attack Bonus:	+9 + value, +2 crew, +4 fire control
Damage:	4d10 x3





YT-1760 Small Transport

The YT-1760 is a somewhat newer model than the 1300, and was released at about the same time as the events portrayed in *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*.

The design of the 1760 was specifically aimed at overcoming problems common to older models, such as a lack of power in the sublight drives, poor maneuverability and slow hyperdrive speed, making the 1760 a more effective transport and shuttle ship. Unfortunately the upgrades in those areas came at the cost of durability and cargo capacity. While the YT-1760 is very popular with independent traders, smugglers and pirates, its lack of cargo space made it unpopular with larger trade guilds and transport companies. Although a fair

number of 1760s were produced, the less sturdy nature caused them to have high maintenance costs. Most of the original 1760s are in scrap yards by the time of the Rebellion era, although some of the small business owners who have 1760s wouldn't trade them in for anything.

Like most Corellian Engineering designs, the YT-1760 is easily modified for any number of purposes. Although it was produced without any armament, most owners quickly added two laser cannons in turret mounts similar to the YT-1300s. Another common modification is to convert some of the 1760s limited cargo space to install shield generators. While it's not usually possible to install military grade shields, even commercial shields increase the 1760's survivability significantly. It's also possible to remove the small bunks built into the 1760 and replace them with more comfortable state rooms, but doing so cuts the number of possible passengers in half.

Craft:	Modified YT-1760
Class:	Transport
Cost:	80,000 - 20,000 (mod.)
Size:	Small (long)
Crew:	1 or 2 (Normal or)
Passenger:	8
Cargo Capacity:	10 metric tons
Consumables:	2 month
Hyperdrive:	X1 backup only
Max Speed:	Ramming
Defense:	22 + class, no armor
Shield Points:	30
Hull Points:	90
DR:	5

Weapon:	Laser cannons (2)
Fire arc:	Turret
Attack Bonus:	+8 (+100, +3 crew, +2 fire control)
Damage:	4d10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M -2, Ln/a

YV Series

Although the YT series continued to sell fairly well, the designers at Corellian Engineering were not willing to rest on their accomplishments. By going back to the drawing board and redesigning everything from scratch, they created the more modern YV series of ships. The first of these new ships was released during the Rise of the Empire era, and new models continued to come out until the Rebellion era. Although generally superior to YT ships in basic performance, the YV series proved to be less easily modified to take on new roles. For this reason the ships never gained the extraordinary reputation that most other Corellian Engineering Corporation ships seem to acquire. Despite this, the designs are solid and functional, and most YV series owners are very happy. Two sample YV series ships are presented below.

The first YV series ship shows more of its YT ancestry in the form of its main dish section. However, the tall, narrow bridge sections that became the hallmark of the YVs is clearly in evidence, and the expanded rear section gives it considerable cargo space. Though not an exceptional ship design, the YV-100 serves well as a light freighter and wealthy spacefarers frequently convert it to act as a pleasure craft. Its lack of overall popularity keeps the price of used YVs down, and even late in the Rebellion era several of these ships are in service in fringe sections of space and on poorer worlds.

Craft: YV-100

Class: Transport

Cost: 150,000 raw 50,000 built

Size: Small (45m long)

Crew: 2 Normal +1

Passenger: 10

Cargo Capacity: 150 metric tons

Consumables: 6 month

Hyperdrive: x3 (basic use)

Max Speed: Attack

Defense: 21 (+10%, +10 armor)

Shield Points: 30

Hull Points: 150

DR: 10

Weapon: Blaster cannons x3 (front)

Fire arc: Partial turret front, right, left

Attack Bonus: +7 (+10%, +2 prov., +2 fire control)

Damage: 4d10 x2

Range modifiers: PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

Weapon: Laser cannons x2 (front)

Fire arc: Front

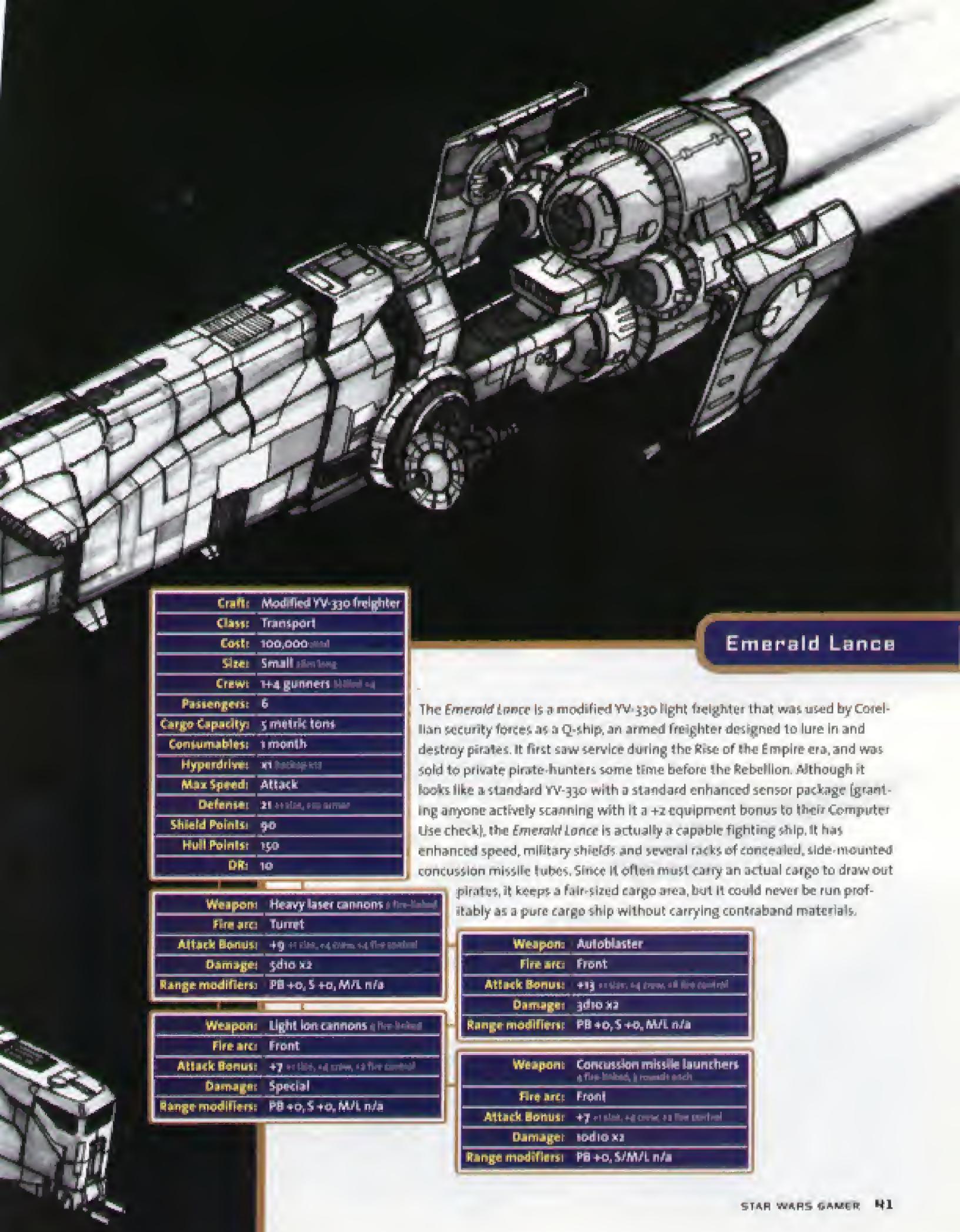
Attack Bonus: +9 (+10%, +4 prov., +2 fire control)

Damage: 5d10 x2

Range modifiers: PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

YV-100





Craft:	Modified YV-330 freighter
Class:	Transport
Cost:	100,000
Size:	Small starship
Crew:	1+4 gunners (Skill +4)
Passengers:	6
Cargo Capacity:	5 metric tons
Consumables:	1 month
Hyperdrive:	x1 (backups)
Max Speed:	Attack
Defense:	21 (+0), rep armor
Shield Points:	90
Hull Points:	150
DR:	10

Emerald Lance

The *Emerald Lance* is a modified YV-330 light freighter that was used by Corellian security forces as a Q-ship, an armed freighter designed to lure in and destroy pirates. It first saw service during the Rise of the Empire era, and was sold to private pirate-hunters some time before the Rebellion. Although it looks like a standard YV-330 with a standard enhanced sensor package (granting anyone actively scanning with it a +2 equipment bonus to their Computer Use check), the *Emerald Lance* is actually a capable fighting ship. It has enhanced speed, military shields, and several racks of concealed, side-mounted concussion missile tubes. Since it often must carry an actual cargo to draw out pirates, it keeps a fair-sized cargo area, but it could never be run profitably as a pure cargo ship without carrying contraband materials.

Weapon:	Heavy laser cannons (x4 fire-linked)
Fire arc:	Turret
Attack Bonus:	+9 (+1 size, +4 crits, +4 fire control)
Damage:	3d10 x2

Weapon:	Light ion cannons (x4 fire-linked)
Fire arc:	Front
Attack Bonus:	+7 (+1 size, +4 crits, +4 fire control)
Damage:	Special

Weapon:	Autoblaster
Fire arc:	Front
Attack Bonus:	+3 (+1 size, +4 crits, +1 fire control)
Damage:	3d10 x2

Weapon:	Concussion missile launchers (x4 fire-linked, 3 rounds each)
Fire arc:	Front
Attack Bonus:	+7 (+1 size, +4 crits, +4 fire control)
Damage:	1d10 x2

The YV-929 was one of the last YV series designs to come out of the Corellian Engineering Corporation. Originally conceived shortly after the Battle of Endor and first produced two years later, the 929 was advertised as an "armed freighter," a term that Corellian Engineering has not used before or since. In theory, the YV-929 were supposed to give merchant ships a fighting chance against rebel raids on commerce. In practice, more 929s were used by the Rebellion than any other single group, although the Corporate Sector Authority is a close second.

The 929 may not look much like other YV ships on the surface, but it's built on the same basic keel. However, large external bays have been added to the design, allowing the 929 to mount heavy shields, carry a fair sized payload, and still bristle with guns. To entice independent ship buyers, the designers added a roomy parlor to the domed section below the bridge, although this is often turned into passenger space by YV-929 owners. Unfortunately, this approach does little for the ship's sturdiness, and 929s were infamous for coming apart after just a few hits after losing their shields. Still, the roomy cargo capacity and heavy armament made the YV-929 a popular ship during the Rebellion, and many remain in use well into the New Jedi Academy era.

Weapons	Double turbolaser cannons +1 fire-linked
Fire arc	Front
Attack Bonus	+7 vs. size, +4 crew, +2 fire control
Damages	6d10 x2
Range modifiers	PB +0, S +0, M +2, L -4

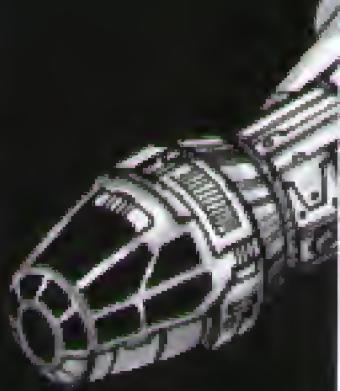
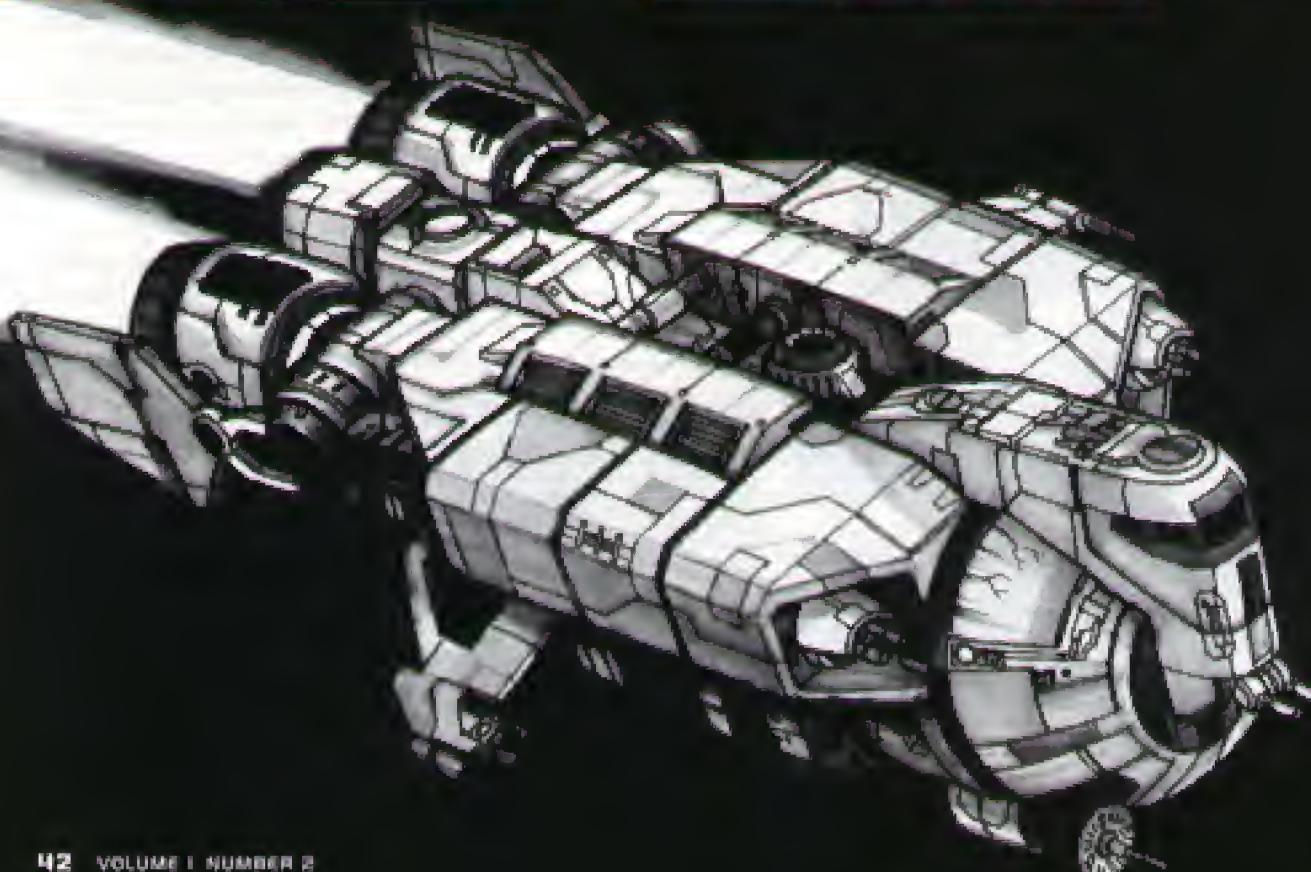
YV-929 Armed Freighter

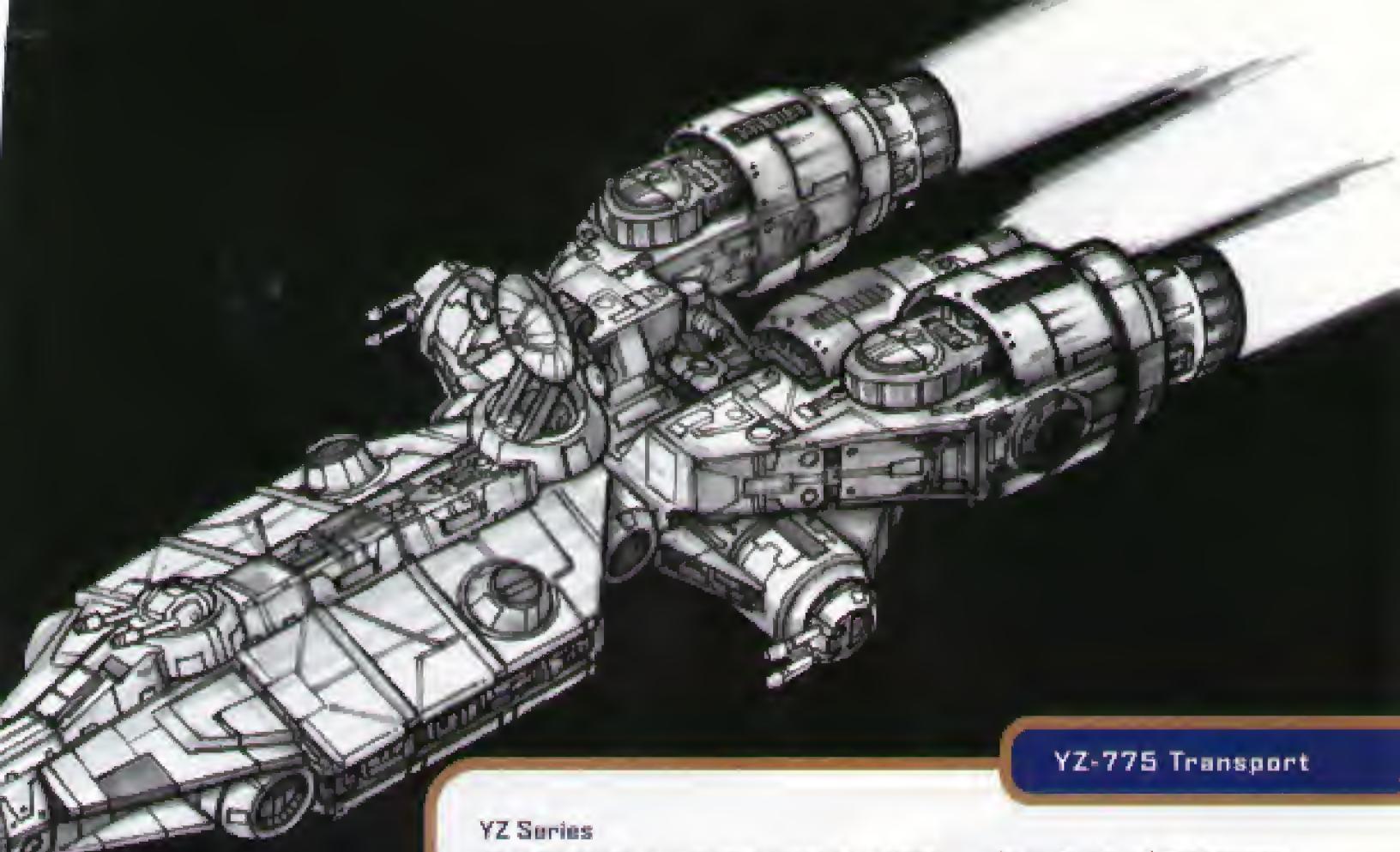
Craft:	YV-929 Armed Freighter
Class:	Transport
Cost:	250,000 new; 100,000 used
Size:	Small (30m long)
Crew:	1+3 gunners Normal vs
Passengers:	6
Cargo Capacity:	150 metric tons
Consumables:	3 month
Hyperdrive:	x2 Backup vs
Max Speed:	Cruising
Defenses:	21 vs. size, +10 bonus
Shield Points:	120
Hull Points:	30
DR:	10

Weapons	Ion cannons +1 fire-linked
Fire arc	Partial turret front, right, left
Attack Bonus	+7 vs. size, +4 crew, +2 fire control
Damages	Special
Range modifiers	PB +0, S +0, M +0, L n/a

Weapons	Triple blasters +1 fire-linked
Fire arc	Front
Attack Bonus	+9 vs. size, +4 crew, +2 fire control
Damages	6d10 x2
Range modifiers	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

Weapons	Concussion missile launchers +1 fire-linked, 10 missiles each
Fire arc	2 Front, 2 Rear
Attack Bonus	+5 vs. size, +4 crew, +2 fire control
Damages	Bd10 x2
Range modifiers	PB +0, S/M/L n/a





YZ-775 Transport

YZ Series

When the Empire came to power, there was a shift in the starship buying patterns across the galaxy. Armed vessels, especially modifiable armed vessels, were suddenly a hot commodity. The Empire, however, was not about to allow civilian shipyards to start turning out armed ships by the dozen, and cracked down on ship designs that seemed geared for combat. The Corellian Engineering Corporation, however, had a long and respectable tradition of ship designs that were easily converted to numerous purposes, and had very little trouble getting such designs approved by the Imperial Bureau of Shipyards and Construction. While the Corellians have always denied that the YZ series of ships were intended to be converted to paramilitary vessels, such claims are generally taken with

a grain of salt. Two YZ series ships are presented below. The YZ-775 is a half-step between most armed transports and actual capitol class ships such as the Corellian corvette. It's larger than most small freighters, measuring fifty-two meters from nose to stern. Its cockpit is almost twice the size of a YT-1300, and has room for the ship's entire 8-person crew. The midships section has two decks, with cargo in the upper deck and state rooms and electronics below. The vessel's powerful engines supply plenty of energy for its compliment of guns and military shields and weaponry. Some small planetary forces have converted YZ-775s for use as customs and inspection craft, but most are used by independent cargo haulers, many ex-Rebellion warriors.

Craft:	YZ-775 Transport
Class:	Transport
Cost:	\$50,000 new / \$350,000 used
Size:	Medium (m long)
Crew:	8 (1 pilot + 7)
Passengers:	14
Cargo Capacity:	400 metric tons
Consumables:	6 month
Hyperdrive:	X1 backup var
Max Speed:	Attack
Defense:	20 + 0 dice, n/a shield
Shield Points:	180
Hull Points:	210
DR:	15

Weapons:	Turbolaser cannons (x2 fire-linked)
Fire arc:	Partial turret (front, right, left)
Attack Bonus:	+1D +4 dice, +0 fire control
Damages:	5d10 x5
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M -3, L -4

Weapons:	Twin laser cannons (x2)
Fire arc:	Turret
Attack Bonus:	+1D +4 dice, +0 fire control
Damages:	5d10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

Weapons:	Proton torpedo tubes (x2) (100 pounds each)
Fire arc:	Front
Attack Bonus:	+6 +4 dice, +0 fire control
Damages:	10d10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S/M/L n/a

The White Wing is a modified YZ-900 freighter. It is actually more lightly armed than a standard YZ-900, locking down its wing guns to forward firing arcs and removing the concussion missile tubes that fired fore and aft. Its primary modification is the use of droid automation to reduce its crew requirements. With the canopy shroud sensors feeding information directly into a series of astromech droids, it's possible for a single pilot to fly the White Wing, although he still needs gunners if he wants to fire more than one weapon at a time. It also uses droid augmentation for its fire control computers, giving it extremely accurate weaponry.

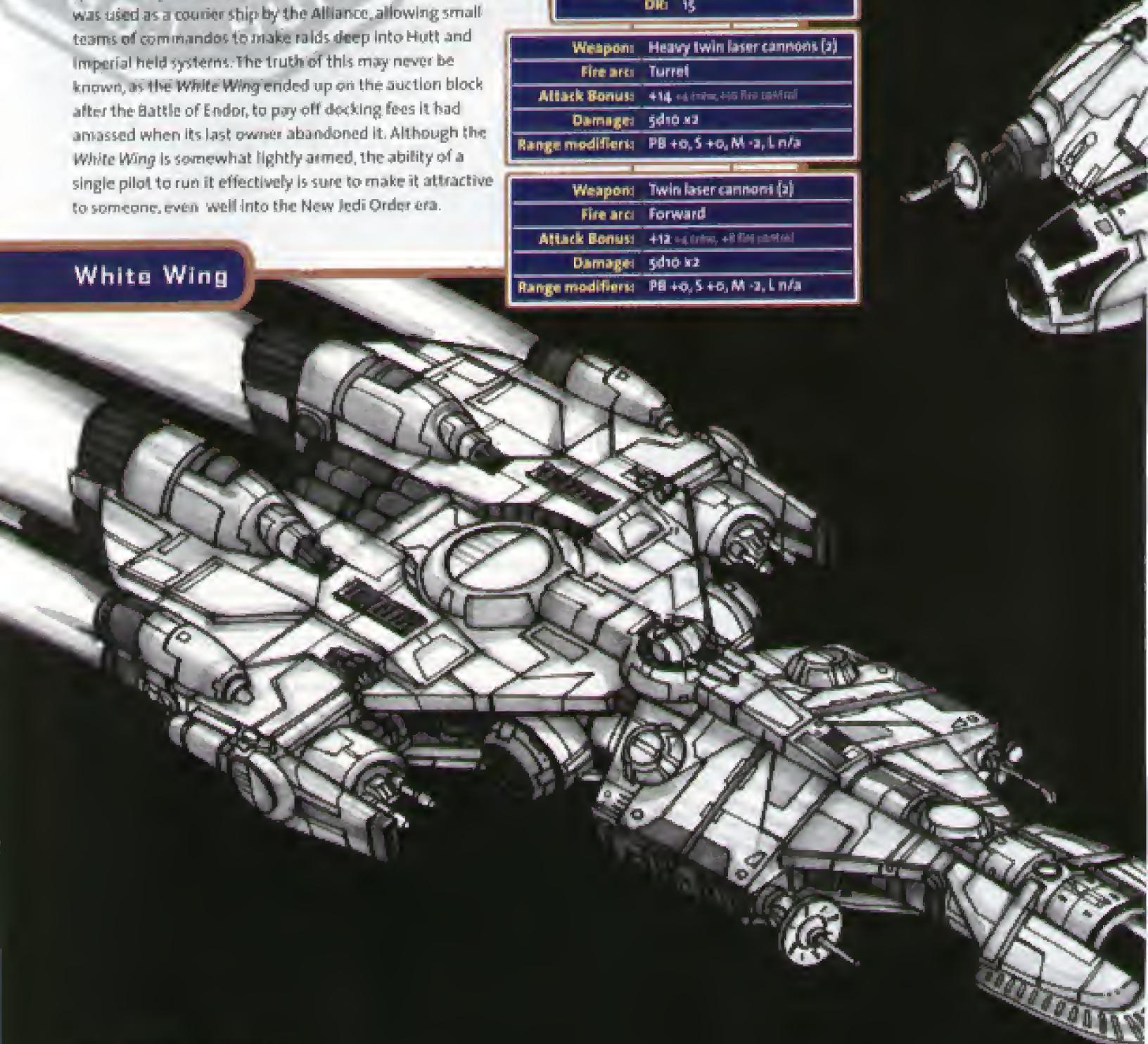
The *White Wing* was spotted making runs in and out of Hutt space during the late years of the Empire. It's speculated that it was used as a courier ship by the Alliance, allowing small teams of commandos to make raids deep into Hutt and Imperial held systems. The truth of this may never be known, as the *White Wing* ended up on the auction block after the Battle of Endor, to pay off docking fees it had amassed when its last owner abandoned it. Although the *White Wing* is somewhat lightly armed, the ability of a single pilot to run it effectively is sure to make it attractive to someone, even well into the New Jedi Order era.

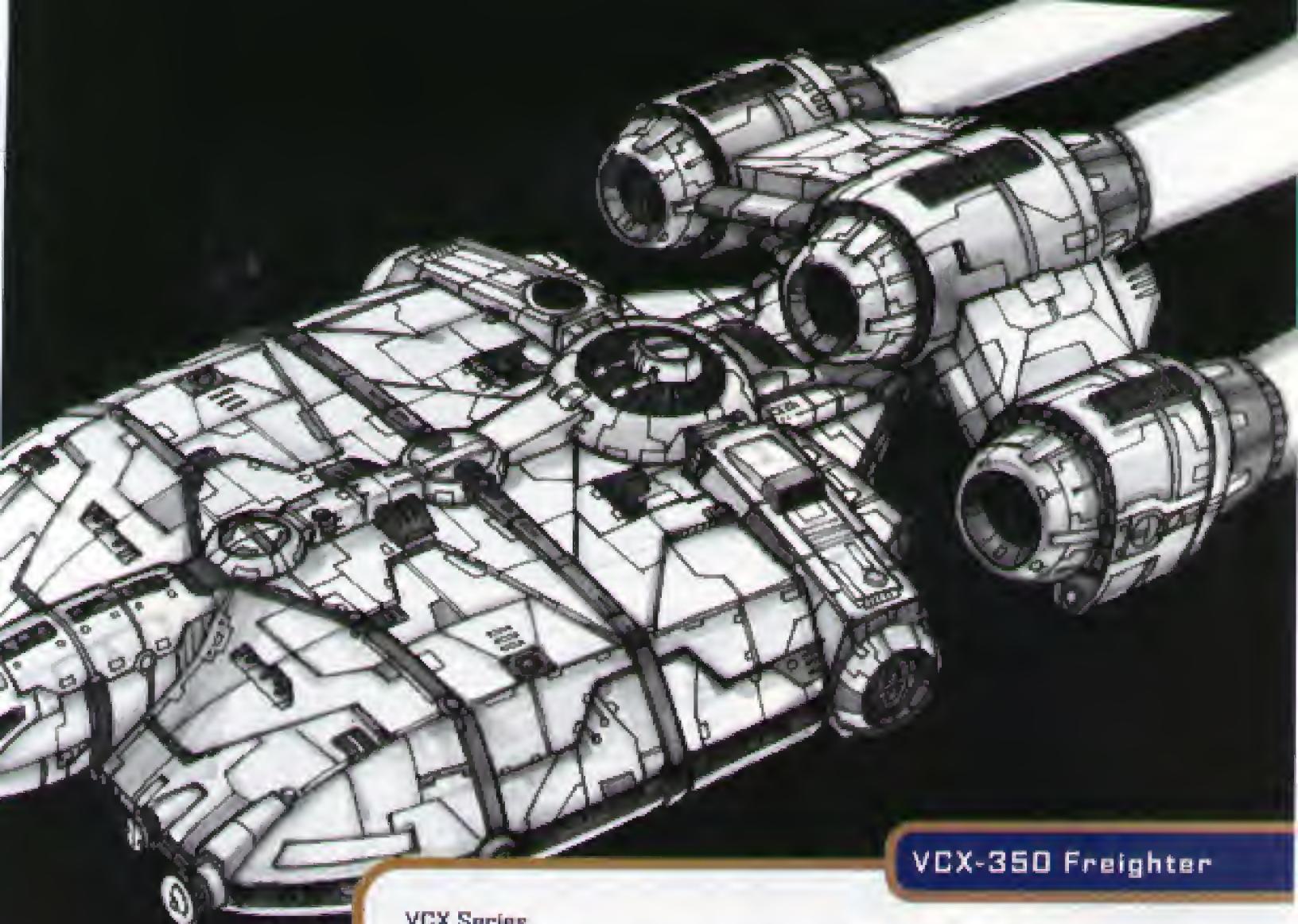
White Wing

Craft:	Modified YZ-geo
Class:	Transport
Cost:	300,000 credits
Size:	Medium (4 person)
Crew:	1+2 gunners (total 4)
Passengers:	14
Cargo Capacity:	500 metric tons
Consumables:	9 month
Hyperdrive:	x1 backup
Max Speed:	Attack
Defense:	20 vs. gun, 40 vs. laser
Shield Points:	150
Hull Points:	240
DR:	15

Weapons:	Heavy twin laser cannons (2)
Fire arm:	Turret
Attack Bonus:	+14, +4 to hit, -2 to fire control
Damage:	5d10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M +2, L n/a

Weapon:	Twin laser cannons (2)
Fire arc:	Forward
Attack Bonus:	+12 (+4 item, +8 fire control)
Damage:	5d10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M -2, L n/a





VCX-350 Freighter

VCX Series

The VCX Series of ships is the newest Corellian Engineering corporation line, designed entirely after the fall of the Empire and the rise of the New Republic. These ships' designs take advantage of the relaxed business environment of the New Republic to incorporate near-military grade shields, powerful engines and heavier weapons packages than most previous stock Corellian designs. So far response to the VCX line is very strong, and they promise to replace the old YT's as the best known Corellian ship designs. Because of their newness during the New Jedi Order era, not many VCX series ships have undergone heavy modification. Three VCX series ships are presented below.

Craft:	VCX-350 Light Freighter
Class:	Transport
Cost:	300,000 - 375,000
Size:	Small
Crew:	2 + 1 gunners (Normal) + 1
Passengers:	8
Cargo Capacity:	350 metric tons
Consumables:	6 month
Hyperdrives:	X1 (fast/slow)
Max Speed:	Attack
Defense:	21 (+10%), 100 armor
Shield Points:	60
Hull Points:	150
DR:	10

Weapons:	Laser cannons (x4 fixed)
Fire arcs:	Partial turret (front, right, left)
Attack Bonus:	+7 (+10%, +2 dice, +1 fire control)
Damage:	4d10 x3
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

The VCX-350 freighter is the new workhorse of Corellian design. It is a top of the line double-decked small freighter that has speed, durability, a reasonable weapons complement and plenty of cargo space. Its price tag keeps it out of range for most independent operators, but small companies are ordering 350s by the score, and so far demand has outstripped supply. The ships are as modular and adaptable as most Corellian Engineering designs, and dozens of standard variants have already appeared. Designed for comfort even over long trips, the passenger and crew accommodations (all on the upper deck) are small staterooms, rather than the bunks common to ships this size. So popular are these new ships that rings of pirates specifically targeting convoys of VCX-350s have popped up; in some cases stealing the ship and dumping its cargo. Despite this risk, VCX-350s are increasingly common sights in the docks and starports of the New Jedi Order era, and promise to have the kind of lasting popularity the ancient YT-1300s enjoyed for more than a century.

The VCX-700 heavy courier is an unusual design for a mass-produced ship. It is specifically designed to provide an extremely secure transport for a small party or valuable cargo. To this end, it comes with more weapons than any other stock Corellian ship its size. It is heavily armored, with an outer hull as thick as a ship twice its size. Its powerful engines give it good speed and maneuverability, and its hyperdrive is almost military grade. It even manages to squeeze in a single escape pod. Of course all this comes at a price, and for the VCX-700 the cost is space. Although it can carry six passengers, it does so in cramped bunks built against a bulkhead. And despite its heavy armaments the VCX-700 is not a vessel of war, lacking the heavy shields or reinforced hull of a true gunboat. Against most fighters or pirate ships however, the heavy courier is more than able to outfight anything it can't outrun.

Craft:	VCX-700 Heavy Courier
Class:	Transport
Cost:	350,000 (new) 250,000 (used)
Size:	Small (thin long)
Crew:	1+4 gunners (skilled +4)
Passenger:	6
Cargo Capacity:	5 metric tons
Consumables:	1 month
Hyperdrives:	x1 (backup x3)
Max Speed:	Attack
Defenses:	3H +100, no armor
Shield Points:	90
Hull Points:	150
DRs:	15

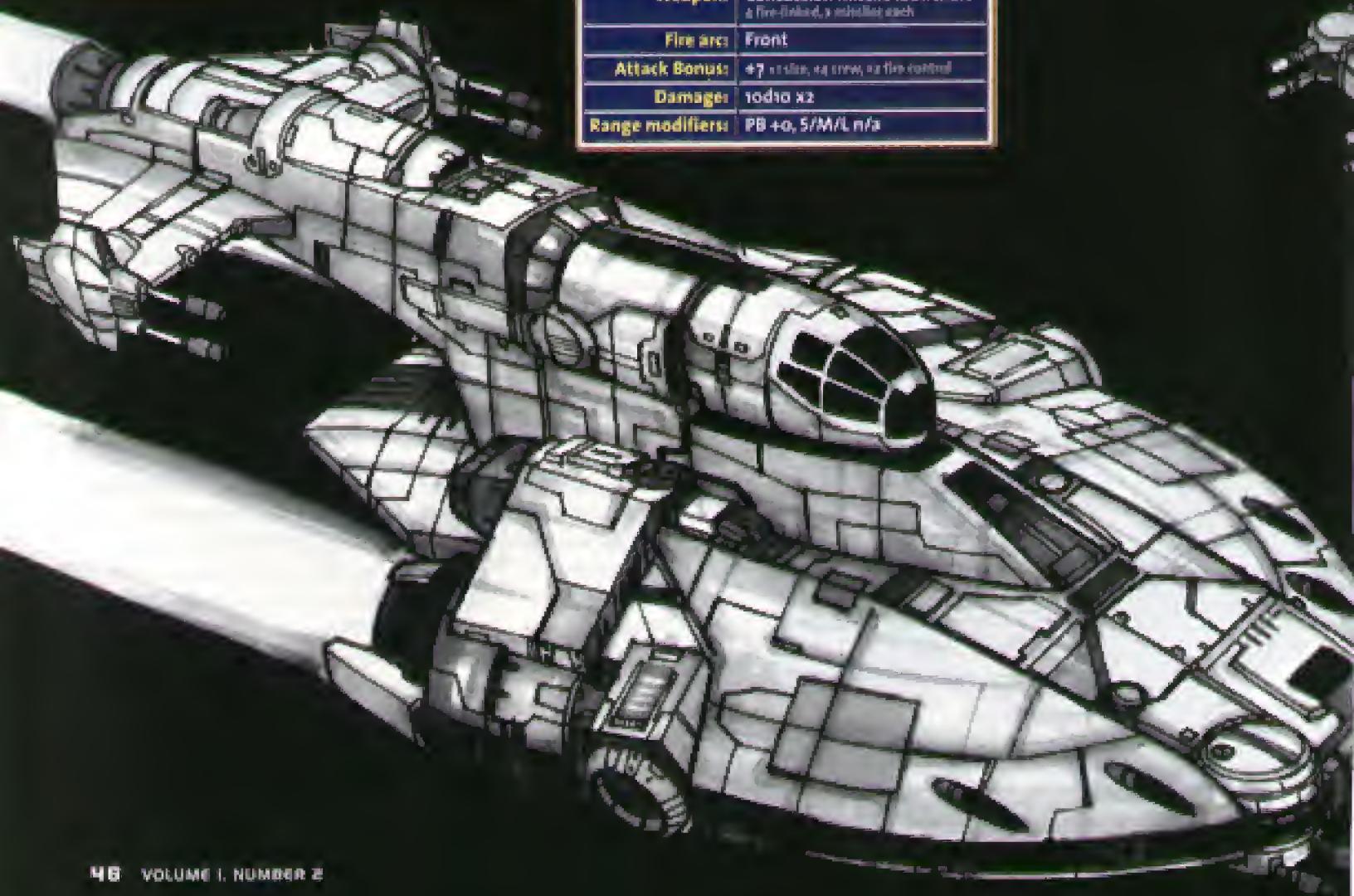
Weapon:	Heavy laser cannons x fire-linked
Fire arcs:	Turret
Attack Bonus:	+9 vs. pilot, +4 crew, +4 fire control
Damages:	5d10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

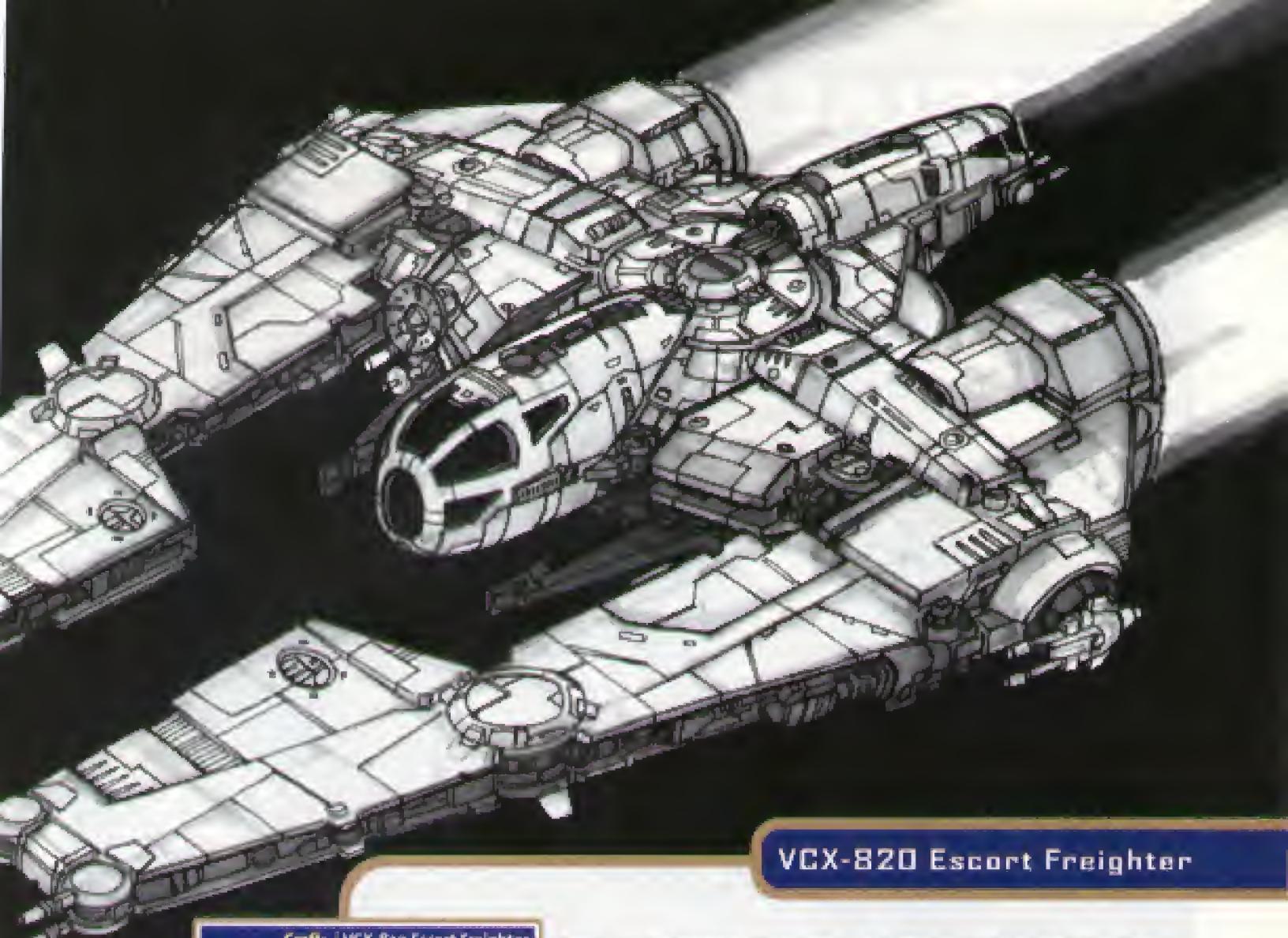
Weapon:	Light ion cannons x fire-linked
Fire arcs:	Front
Attack Bonus:	+7 vs. pilot, +2 crew, +2 fire control
Damages:	Special
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

Weapon:	Autoblaster
Fire arcs:	Front
Attack Bonus:	+13 vs. pilot, +4 crew, +4 fire control
Damages:	3d10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

Weapon:	Concussion missile launchers x fire-linked, 3 missiles each
Fire arcs:	Front
Attack Bonus:	+7 vs. pilot, +4 crew, +4 fire control
Damages:	10d10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S/M/L n/a

VCX-700 Heavy Courier





VCX-820 Escort Freighter

Craft:	VCX-820 Escort Freighter
Class:	Transport
Cost:	450,000 <small>new</small> 300,000 <small>used</small>
Size:	Small <small>length</small>
Crews:	2 + 6 gunners skilled +4
Passengers:	None
Cargo Capacity:	1 metric tons
Consumables:	6 month
Hyperdrives:	x2 backup w/o
Max Speed:	Attack
Defense:	21 + 1 hit, +10 armor
Shield Points:	180
Hull Points:	150
DR:	10

Weapon:	Twin heavy laser cannons (2)
Fire arc:	Turret
Attack Bonus:	+9 vs. side, +4 crew, +4 fire control
Damages:	6d10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB -2, S +0, M/L n/a
Weapon:	Autoblasters (8)
Fire arc:	Partial turret front, right, left
Attack Bonus:	+13 vs. side, +4 crew, +8 fire control
Damages:	3d10 x2
Range modifiers:	PB -2, S +0, M/L n/a

The VCX-820 escort freighter was rushed into production just as the threat from the Yuuzhan Vong came to light. In the New Jedi Order era, calling the VCX-820 an "escort freighter" is an effort to admit to this ship's military purpose without labeling it as a warship. The VCX-820 has very little value as a transport of any kind. However, it is very heavily armed, and is capable of protecting several other freighters it travels with. Unlike many armed freighters the VCX-820 is built to military specifications, and can sustain long-term fighting. Originally conceived as a ship to operate near the Imperial Remnant, the sudden conflict with the Yuuzhan Vong has made this ship a very hot item. With the Fringe regions suddenly under attack from outside the galaxy and New Republic forces too busy protecting the Core World to worry about piracy, it has become important that merchant convoys be able to defend themselves. While many modern freighters are fairly well armed, numerous older ships need a strong escort. The VCX-820 is a popular ship for that role, though it remains to be seen if it continues to be popular during less turbulent times.

Weapon:	Proton torpedo launcher 16 torpedoes
Fire arc:	Front
Attack Bonus:	+11 vs. side, +4 crew, +4 fire control
Damages:	10d6 x2
Range modifiers:	PB -2, S/M/L n/a

SPECIAL OPS



The Privateer

BY BARBARA LEONG

ILLUSTRATED BY STEPHEN SHAW

Whether roaming the space lanes, tracking down smugglers, or escorting capital ships bearing important nobles, the privateer is a prestige class dedicated to ensuring the prosperity of his government. The privateer is commissioned by a patron to defend a planet and its holdings from pirate attack and root out threats to the governing sovereignty. Some privateers are bullies serving a corrupt governor, while others are noble spacers acting on behalf of a peaceful queen. Regardless, all privateers pull it off with style and panache.

A privateer's patron is a high-ranking member of a planetary government body. The patron is usually planetary royalty, but a privateer can serve any government patron with distinction, even Imperial or Republic patrons with deep pockets.

The privateer typically flies in a well-

armed transport ship that he commands. Generally, he brings this ship with him into service and risks his own property for his patron. The rewards far outweigh the risks for the dedicated privateer, however, for he keeps what he finds in the name of his patron.

Some question the honor of this. Given the behavior of many privateers, some individuals do not see how different they are from the pirates they claim to oppose. True, some privateers are no better than well-funded thugs, but the best strive to protect their planet's interests and increase safety for their patron's holdings.

Though generally free to use their judgment in service, a patron sometimes calls upon a privateer to perform a specific duty or function such as "Hunt down the notorious pirate, Gunmetal Gellak." Or "Escort the

senators to their council meeting." Although a privateer can refuse an assignment by his patron, he might find his privileges restrained until he returns to his patron's good graces.

Special Abilities

LETTER OF MARQUE

The privateer has full rights granted him by his patron to attack and seize any ship or cargo belonging to an entity which the government deems an enemy of the state.

BEMOLDEN

Occasionally, a patron might ask a favor of a privateer. If the privateer does not willingly accede to his patron's request, his highest level special ability is lost until he obeys the request.

The Privateer

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fear Save	Fortune Save	Will Save	Special	Circumstance Bonus	Reputation Gain
1st	+0	+0	+1	+2	Letter of Marque, Beholden	+1	+1
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+3	Repel Boarders	+2	+1
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+3	Half Repairs	+2	+0
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Fly Defensively	+2	+1
5th	+4	+1	+4	+4		+3	+1
6th	+5	+2	+5	+5	Hyperspace Track	+3	+0
7th	+6	+2	+5	+5		+4	+1
8th	+6	+2	+6	+6	Full Repairs	+4	+1
9th	+7	+3	+6	+6		+4	+0
10th	+8	+3	+7	+7	Enforce Blockade	+5	+1

REPEL BOARDERS

Because of his familiarity with his own ship and the courage gained from knowing an entire planet supports his actions, the privateer gains a +1 morale bonus to all attack and saving throw rolls while fighting in melee or ranged combat on his own ship. In addition, he gains a +2 morale bonus to his Defense when fighting in melee or ranged combat on his own ship.

HALF REPAIRS

Because of his status, a privateer can expect to pay half the normal cost for repairs to his ship at any shipyard controlled by his patron's government.

FLY DEFENSIVELY

When escorting or defending another ship, a privateer gains a +2 circumstance bonus



The steadfast crew.

to all Pilot rolls. In addition, any gunners on his ship receive a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls with ship weapons.

HYPERSPACE TRACK

Due to a knowledge of starships, hyperspace travel, and most importantly, the person he is tracking, the privateer can deduce likely destinations, waypoints, and tricks of anyone attempting to flee him through hyperspace. Tracking this way requires a successful Astrogate check. The difficulty depends on how well the privateer knows his quarry.

Knowledge Level	DC
Intimately	5
Well	10
Familiar	15
Barely	25

Intimately: The privateer has confronted his quarry on more than two separate occasions and is familiar with the quarry's tactics and methods.

Well: The privateer has confronted his quarry on at least two separate occasions and knows the quarry's tactics and methods.

Familiar: The privateer has either confronted his quarry once before or is well briefed on the quarry's tactics and methods.

Barely: The privateer has never confronted his quarry and has only little or no information on the quarry's tactics and methods.

Class Features

Requirements

To become a privateer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Base Attack: +6

Skills: Astrogate +6, Diplomacy +4, Pilot +6

Feats: Starship Operation

Must own his own ship.

Must have committed an act of unusual courage and loyalty in front of reliable witnesses, which directly benefits a planetary government.

Must have demonstrated good judgment in the patron's eyes, making him trustworthy to act in the patron's name.

Must call in a favor to gain 1st level.

Reputation: 5+

LIMITATIONS

If a privateer ever knowingly disobeys his patron or acts contrary to his patron's well being, he loses all class special abilities.

CLASS SKILLS

The privateer's class skills are: Astrogate (Int), Computer Use (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (any), Pilot (Dex), Repairs (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis).

SKILL POINTS AT EACH ADDITIONAL LEVEL:
6 + Int modifier

1d10 Vitality per Level

FULL REPAIRS

Because of his status, a privateer pays nothing for repairs to his ship at any shipyard controlled by his patron's government.

ENFORCE BLOCKADE

As part of an official, government-sponsored blockade, the privateer gains a +4 circumstance bonus to all Pilot rolls. In addition, any gunners on his ship receive a +2 morale bonus to attack rolls with ship weapons.

YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS CAN EXPERIENCE STAR WARS roleplaying in an easy-to-learn format with our fast-play version of the STAR WARS Roleplaying Game! Use your imagination to portray a daring hero living in the Star Wars universe. If you've ever wanted to be a noble Jedi, fierce Wookiee, or crafty scoundrel, this game is for you. Try it now!

STAR WARSTM

THE PREDATORS

FAST-PLAY GAME



BY OWEN K. C. STEPHENS

ILLUSTRATED BY ADAM HUGHES

Confused but intrigued by roleplaying? This "fast-play" version of the *Star Wars* Roleplaying Game is designed to give you a feel for the basics of roleplaying. The full game contains all sorts of additional options, including rules for creating characters and designing your own adventures in the *Star Wars* universe.

But we call this a fast-play game because you can begin playing it right now. Look over the next few pages, gather your friends, and get ready for an adventure set long ago in a galaxy far, far away...

Playing the Game

Decide who will be the Gamemaster. The Gamemaster ("GM" for short) controls the events of the game. That person also plays the creatures and opponents the characters encounter. The GM is like a storyteller, so think about which of your friends would do the best job telling a story. Most of the information in this game is for the GM.

After you decide who'll be the Gamemaster, the rest of the players pick characters. Take the character sheets and divide them up so that each player has a character. It's

okay for someone to take more than one character if there aren't enough players.

Like the characters from the *Star Wars* movies, Rann I-Kanu, Arani Korden, Rorworr, and Galak are heroes who go out and experience the events of a story. Your characters are the stars of the show; the Gamemaster is the director.

THE GAMEMASTER

When you're the GM, you coordinate the actions that take place in the game. You're both a moderator and a referee. You tell the other players what their characters see and hear. You help them resolve the success or failure of actions they take. You also choose actions for other characters in the story.

Sometimes, the GM's characters are the "bad guys." For instance, if the players want their characters to fight a bounty hunter they encounter, the Gamemaster decides what the bounty hunter does and resolves his actions. At the same time, the GM helps them determine which characters get hurt and how serious their wounds are.

During the game, each player gets to decide what his or her character does at

any given moment. When the Gamemaster describes a group of battle droids marching into a deserted plaza, the players get to decide whether their characters attack, wait, and see what the droids do, try to sneak away, or attempt anything else they can imagine.

THE CHARACTERS

For this game, characters are provided. The character sheets show what each character looks like and what actions he or she can take (like striking with a lightsaber, firing a blaster, or operating a computer).

The heroes of this game usually act as a

What you Need

- Your friends (up to five of them, including you).
- these pages of the magazine.
- A pencil or two.
- And a set of polyhedral dice. These are dice with 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 or 20 sides, and can be found in most games and hobby stores.

group, but each player portrays an individual character. Each one has motivations and desires that guide his or her actions. Each one has opinions on how to aid the Republic and fight for the cause of justice.

The GM doesn't get a character sheet—Instead, the rest of this game text acts like a "character sheet" for the Gamemaster. The GM plays all the other characters and creatures the players meet. The adventure here describes what might happen as a result. At this point, the players should look at their character sheets for a few minutes. The GM should keep reading.

THE GAME SESSION

This fast-play game leads you through a game session, presenting an adventure like those found in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*. The rules are introduced as you need them, so you don't have to memorize anything.

The adventure is divided into "areas". Each area has a number that corresponds to a location on the maps you will find in the following pages. Each area has its own directions and rules, so you don't need to read ahead. However, if you have time, it's helpful to skim ahead to get a sense of what happens later in the story.

For each area, follow the directions, describe the situation as it occurs, and add your own details. If you decide that an area has an aura of darkness that raises the hairs on a character's neck, that's okay. You're the GM, so make your descriptions as vivid as possible.

When the players tell you what they want to do, you tell them whether they succeed or fail and what happens as a result. The directions and rules for each area will help you make these decisions.

The game is based on dice-rolling and discussion. There's no need to run around and act out events, although gestures and facial expressions might help convey what you're trying to say. A player can speak in the voice of his character ("I attack the smuggler") or refer to his character in the third person ("Rorworr fires his bowcaster"). The GM can use different voices while portraying the other characters (harsh, stern voices for the smugglers, or a nervous, moosy voice for the

archaeologist), or she can describe each scene like a narrator ("The archaeologist tells you his speeder has been stolen").

GAMEMASTER ADVICE

In this game, you'll find many things to help you manage the adventure. First, the map provides a visual aid for the setting—it shows where the important locations are and how big each area is. You can also use the illustrations here to help describe the creatures in each setting, just as the illustrations on the character sheets help you visualize each character.

Throughout this game, you'll see text in colored boxes. This is called "read-aloud" text. It's meant to be read to the players to describe the setting and the situation. Keep the rest of it to yourself until the time is right to reveal it to players.

The Predators

Once the characters have looked over their character sheets, you can start to play. Begin by reading the boxed text to the players. Once you start the numbered areas, the read-aloud text often ends with a question posed to the players. Their answer to this question helps them decide what their characters do:

Remember that the characters don't all have to do the same thing. Galak can shoot a droid while Rann uses a Force power, even while Arani is trying to open a door. You tell them the results of their actions: "Galak hits the droid, Rann's Force power heals himself, and Arani can't get the door open." It's easiest if the players take turns telling you what their characters are doing. That way, you can handle each action individually.

When something isn't covered in the rules, make up your own answer. That's the GM's job. If Rorworr's player wants to hide behind a tree so he can attack a creature that's running by, you need to decide whether that works.

Read the following text to the players:

Each of you controls a character: a Jedi, soldier, scout, or scoundrel. These characters live in the *Star Wars* universe on the planet Naboo, before the events of *The Phantom Menace*. You are all friends and

know each other well. As valiant heroes, your characters are dedicated to aiding the Republic and ending all forms of injustice and evil.

As we play, I'll describe the setting and the action as it occurs. You can tell me when your character wants to do something.

First, let's have each of you introduce your character.

Have each player briefly describe his or her character so that everyone knows what everyone else can do. Then read the following text to the players:

The Galactic Republic is a vast nation spanning many star systems, including the planet of Naboo. Jedi Knights serve as guardians and advisors to the Republic, for they are strong in the Force. One such Jedi is Master Ali-Vor, a scholar who has come to Naboo to further the training of his Padawan learner, Rann I-Karr. Master Ali-Vor regularly assigns tasks to Rann, who often enlists the aid of his friends.

Recently, Master Ali-Vor has been looking for smugglers who have been transporting rare creatures off Naboo. He has asked all of you to look into reports that some of these criminals are working out of a secret base near Theed, the capitol city of Naboo. Although Ali-Vor doesn't consider these rumors valid, he believes the investigation will be good training for Rann, as well as an opportunity to test the resourcefulness of his friends.

After a few days of checking around and asking questions, you received information about smugglers from one of Arani's trusted contacts. The contact suggested that you investigate an ancient shrine hidden in the nearby jungle. She sketched a crude map to the site and handed it to Rorworr. Rorworr has used the map to lead you to near where the shrine can be found.

Proceed to the start of the adventure, Jungle Clearing.

STAR WARS

THE PREDATORS

Area I: Jungle Clearing

Read the following text to the players:

You left Theed hours ago. A thin mist clings to the ground, and the air is heavy with the musty scent of jungle flowers. The air is still and quiet. Rorworr's map indicates a clearing up ahead, with the hidden shrine not far beyond it. As you approach the clearing, you spot a speeder off to the side of the trail, crudely hidden in the foliage. You hear a growling sound coming from the far side of it. Something is smashing into the speeder over and over again. A few lights are still flickering in the speeder's cockpit, suggesting its computer still has power. What do you want to do?

A Naboo archeologist piloted the speeder here to investigate the nearby shrine. When he walked up to see who was moving into the ancient building, a band of smugglers captured him and left his vehicle behind. Now a short-tempered creature called a veermok is prowling on the far side of the abandoned speeder. The veermok is a predator native to Naboo. It's a little smaller than a lion, with powerful legs and sharp claws. If it senses the characters, it attacks. The characters have many options at this point. Some common choices are detailed below.

WALK UP AND LOOK AT THE SPEEDER

This is a bold, heroic course of action, though not a particularly cautious one. If the characters approach the speeder, the veermok notices them and leaps to attack. Refer to Handling the Fight, below.

DETERMINE WHAT'S ATTACKING THE SPEEDER
This is a very reasonable course of action. If a player's character wants to figure out what kind of creature might be smashing into the speeder, that player rolls 1 twenty-sided die and adds the Survival bonus listed on his character's sheet. If the total of the die and the bonus is 13 or higher, the character determines that the creature is a veermok prowling through its territory. Veermoks aren't too smart, but they're very territorial. (Because of this, some are cap-

tured illegally and sold as guard animals.) Since the creature is angry, it will probably attack the first character who approaches it. If the heroes ignore it, it might just leave them alone. Rorworr has the best chance of working this out, since he has the largest bonus to his Survival rolls.

IGNORE THE SPEEDER AND MOVE ON

Although not particularly heroic, this is a possible choice. If the characters stay away from the speeder, they won't be attacked by the veermok. Then again, they won't be able to look inside the vehicle and figure out who brought it here. Make sure the players really want to ignore the speeder before moving on to the next area.

LEAVE

The characters can decide to turn around and head back toward Theed. If they abandon their search, Master Ali-Vor will be upset. Fortunately, Rorworr can bring them back with his map a few hours later. By then, the veermok will be gone.

HANDLING THE FIGHT

If the characters get into a fight with the veermok, proceed through the combat by taking turns. First, let each character do one thing, such as shooting the veermok or using a Force power. Ask each player what his or her character does. When they're all done, tell them what the veermok does. Unless you can think of a better action, have the veermok attack the closest character. Go back and forth between all the characters and the veermok until the battle is over.

Attacks: First, make an attack roll. When a player's character attacks the veermok, that player rolls 1 twenty-sided die and adds the character's Attack bonus. If a player rolls a 14 or higher, the character hits. If the result is less than 14, it's a miss. Move on to the next character after each attack.

Damage: If a character hits, the player rolls for damage. Determine how much damage the character deals by rolling the damage dice listed on the character sheet. Rorworr rolls 3 ten-sided dice for damage. Rann rolls 2 eight-sided dice. Galak rolls 3 six-sided dice and Arani rolls 3 four-sided dice.

Wounds: Mark off damage from the veermok's wounds, shown below. If the veermok has lost some but not all of its wounds, it's injured. When you've marked all of the wound boxes, the veermok is dead and the fight is over.

VEERMOK

Wounds: 24



Force powers: Rann has Force powers he can use. When this happens, follow the instructions on Rann's character sheet. Rann can use a Force power instead of attacking.

The Veermok's Turn: When all the players have acted, it's the veermok's turn. The veermok attacks one character each turn. For each attack, roll 1 twenty-sided die and add 4. Check the Defense score of the character it's attacking. If the result is equal to or higher than the character's Defense score, the veermok hits, and you roll 1 six-sided die for damage. Have the player whose character was hit mark off damage; that character is now injured. When a character's last wound box is filled, he is dead (and he can't take any more actions).

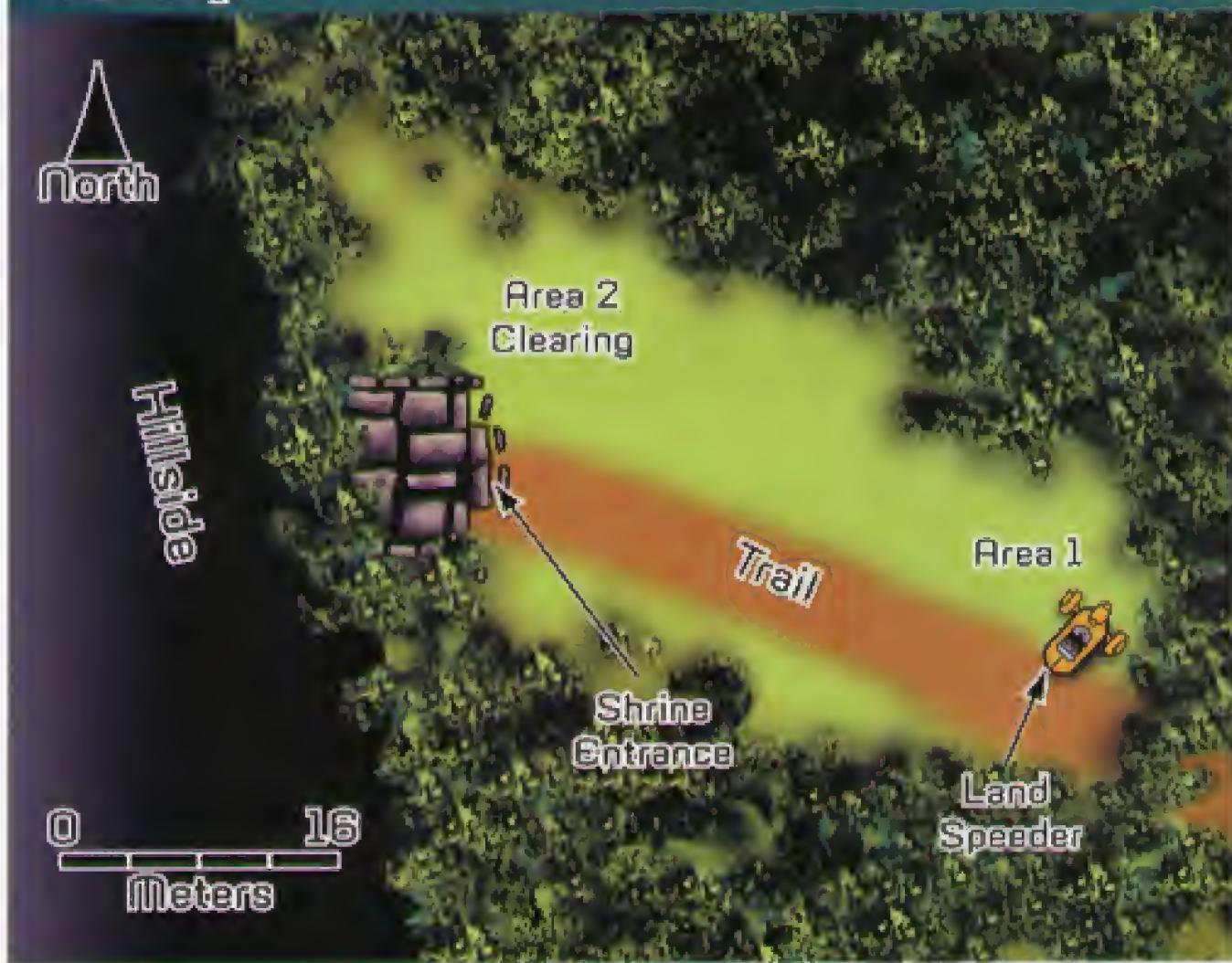
Description: As you play through the battle, describe the action as if you were watching one of the Star Wars movies. Tell the players about the sizzling hum of the lightsabers, loud explosions from the blasters, and the vicious veermok as it howls and gnashes its teeth.

Once the veermok has been defeated, the characters have more options from which to choose.

EXAMINE THE SPEEDER

The speeder is a typical one-person transport. Markings identify it as the property of Theed's Royal House of Learning. Its computer has been shot with a blaster and is just barely operational, but the speeder is otherwise in usable condition. If a player's character wants to retrieve information from the damaged computer, the player rolls 1 twenty-sided die and adds the character's Computer Use bonus. If the total of the die and the bonus is 15 or greater, the following information is retrieved.

The Jungle



- The speeder belongs to Tassach Beh, a professor of archeology from Theed. He's kept his journal notes in its computer. His last entry is from several days ago. He left to investigate strange activity he noticed in the shrine, but he has not returned to the speeder since.
- The shrine has been abandoned for centuries, but its interior is still in good condition.
- In addition to the obvious main entrance, there is a hidden entrance off to the side of the shrine. An ancient mechanical trap protects the hidden entrance.

LOCATE THE SHRINE

From here the heroes have no difficulty finding the shrine. When they get there, go to the description of Area 2: The Shrine Entrance.

Area 2: The Shrine Entrance

The thick foliage of the jungle parts, revealing an ornate stone building constructed against a hill. Vines cover the entire structure, but a large door can be seen in front. A small red light exposes a security lock bolted onto the ancient entrance, clearly a new addition. Shrubs and trees cover the hillside, making it difficult to determine the exact size of the shrine. It's obviously fairly large, extending back into the hill.

The characters need to disable the security lock before they can enter. If a hero wants to disable the lock, a player must roll 1 twenty-sided die and add his or her character's Disable Device bonus. If the total is 12 or higher, the lock is disabled and the characters can move past the door. Only Arani has a chance to disable the lock. (The other characters have big penalties to their rolls). If Arani

can't disable the lock, shooting it or hitting it with a lightsaber destroys it. Once the heroes have dealt with the lock and opened the door, go to the description for Area 3: The Guardroom.

If the characters know about the secret entrance, they may decide to start searching for it. If they decide to look around, read the following text:

A quick search of the area off to the left of the entrance reveals a small door hidden behind the vines. A simple latch opens the secret door, but there are a number of small holes in the doorway. These suggest that a trap of some kind will go off if the door is opened.

A character opening the door without disabling the trap takes 1 six-sided die of damage. Mark the wounds on that character's sheet. If a hero wants to disable the trap, a

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Fast Play Guide

player needs to roll 1 twenty-sided die and add his or her character's Disable Device bonus. If the total is 12 or higher, the trap has been disabled. Only Arani has a good chance of disarming the trap. (All the other characters have big penalties to their rolls). Each character can make one attempt. Once the heroes have opened the secret door, go to the description for Area 3: The Guard Room.

Area 3: The Guard Room

The doorway opens into a large, stone room. Glowlamps have been bolted onto the walls to provide illumination. Power cables run along the ceiling and down the corridor leading from the room. In the middle of the room, there's a holochess table and a few chairs. Four scruffy-looking men with facemasks and blasters stand near the table, their weapons ready in their hands. What do you do?

These men are smugglers. If the heroes came in the front door, the smugglers attack them immediately. If the heroes came in the secret door, they'll have enough time to confer with each other briefly before attacking.

HANDLING THE FIGHT

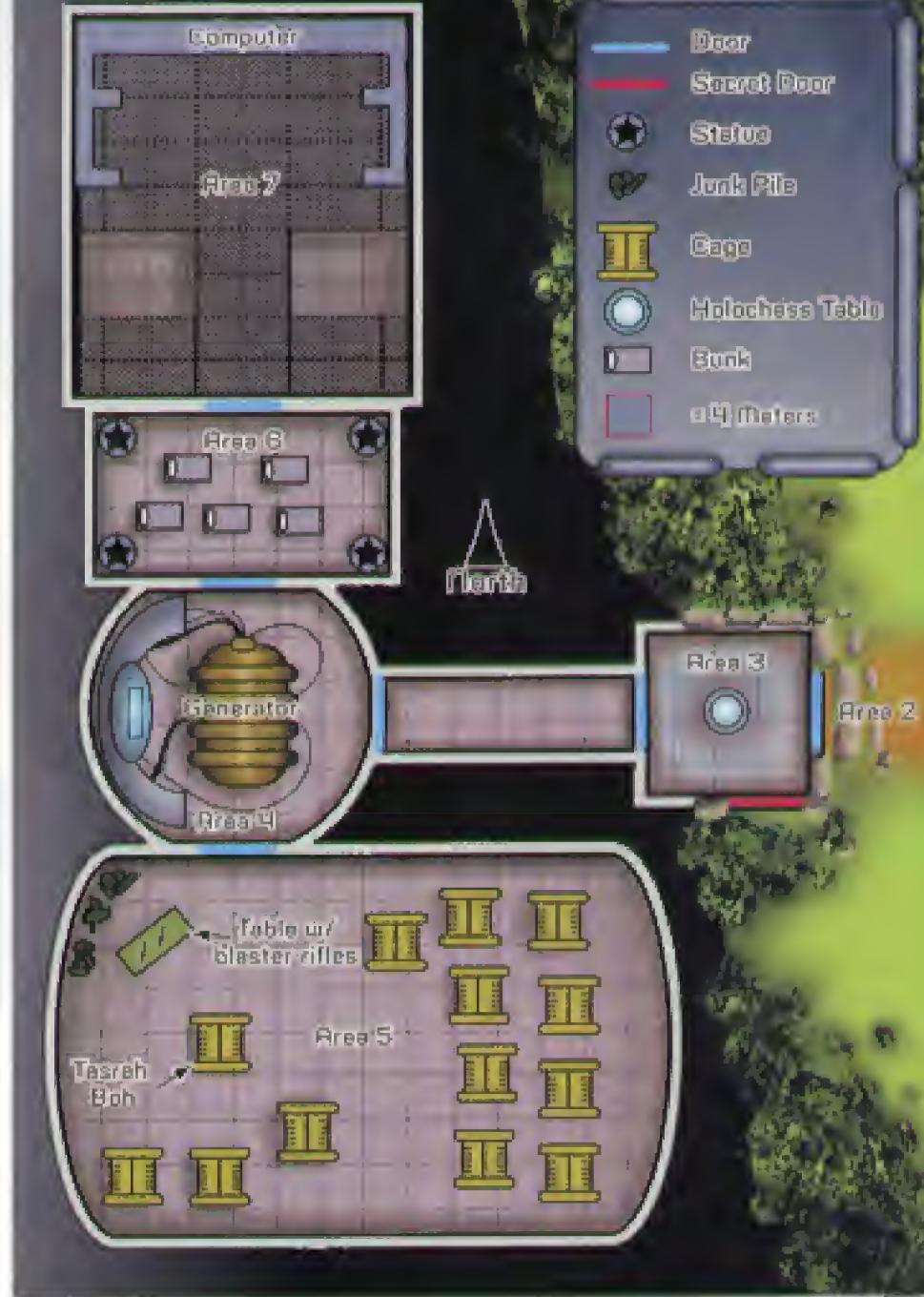
Play through the combat by taking turns (just like the fight with the veermok). If the characters attack from the secret door, they surprise the smugglers and may each act twice before the smugglers get a turn. After that, the heroes and smugglers take turns normally.

Attacks: When a player's character attacks a smuggler, the player rolls 1 twenty-sided die and adds the character's Attack bonus. The player needs a 12 or higher to hit.

Damage: If the attack hits, determine how much damage the character does by rolling the damage dice listed on the character sheet. Mark off the smugglers' wounds below.

Wounds: Each smuggler has eleven wounds. When you've marked off all of a smuggler's wound boxes, he is dead (and

The Shrine



can't take any more actions). When all the smugglers are dead, the fight is over.

Force powers: Rann can use Force powers. When this happens, follow the instructions on Rann's character sheet. Rann can use a Force power instead of attacking.

SMUGGLER 1
Wounds: 11

SMUGGLER 2
Wounds: 11

The Smugglers' Turn: When all the players have acted, it's the smugglers' turn. Each smuggler attacks a different character each turn. For each attack, roll 1 twenty-sided die and add 1. Check the Defense score of the defending character. If the

SMUGGLER 3
Wounds: 11

SMUGGLER 4
Wounds: 11

result is equal to or higher than the character's Defense, the smuggler hits; roll 3 six-sided dice for damage. Have the player whose character was hit mark off wounds. That character is now injured. When all of a character's wound boxes have been marked, that character is dead (and can't take any more actions). **Description:** As you play through the battle, describe the action. Tell everyone about the startled smugglers scrambling for cover, or emulate their wild howls as they fire blasters at the heroes.

Once the fight is over, the characters have options to choose from again.

EXAMINE THE SMUGGLERS

Heroes may want to remove the smugglers' facemasks. They're clearly human, although they're filthy and unkempt examples of humanity. Their blasters have been poorly maintained and are possibly dangerous to fire. They have nothing of use or value on their bodies.

CHECK THE HOLOGAME TABLE

The dejark hologame table is covered with a pattern of checkered circles. It's designed to project several different kinds of games on its surface. It hasn't been maintained, and it's obviously broken.

CHECK THE CORRIDOR

There is one corridor leading out of this room, running twenty feet and ending in a new metal door. The door is unlocked and opens at the press of a button. After the heroes open it, go to Area 4: The Power Generator.

Area 4: The Power Generator

The metal door opens to reveal a large round room with a domed ceiling. Ancient carvings cover the walls, and a few lights have been bolted over them. A large power generator sits humbling in the middle of the room. Long cables run out in all directions. A small computer has been set up on the far side of the generator. Its lights blink, and its screen glows. Two doors exit the room, one to the left and one to the right.

The main decision the heroes must make is which way to go. They might also decide to take a look at the computer first.

CHECKING THE COMPUTER

The computer has a security code to prevent unauthorized access. If a hero wants to bypass the security code, a player needs to roll 1 twenty-sided die and add his or her character's Computer Use bonus. If the total is 14 or more, the character bypasses the security system and learns the following information.

- » The left door leads to the storage room. The right door leads to the barracks.
- » The leader of the smuggling operation is a mercenary named Siddle Frex. He has a personal chamber in the back of the shrine, beyond the barracks.
- » The smugglers are capturing creatures called veromoks, and illegally selling them as guard animals. In addition to trafficking in exotic animals, Siddle plans to start smuggling illegal weapons onto Naboo.
- » The storage room contains several damaged weapons the smugglers haven't been able to fix, along with one prisoner, Professor Tasrah Boh.

CHECKING THE DOORS

The doors are large and metallic, obviously placed here recently. They don't have locks, but they are too thick to hear anything through them.

If the heroes decide to go through the left door into the storage room, go to Area 5: The Storage Room. If they decide to go through the right door into the barracks, go to Area 6: The Barracks.

Area 5: The Storage Room

The storage room is the largest chamber you've seen yet. It seems to be a large section of a hollowed out hill. It lacks the sculptures present throughout the rest of the shrine. There are several large piles of junk near the doors, including a table with two damaged blaster rifles and some tools. The back of the room is taken up by dozens of empty cages. One cage contains an elderly Naboo man. As you look around, a small spherical droid

floats up out of the junk and flies toward you. What do you do?

The small round droid is a training remote, normally used by Jedi to practice their lightsaber skills. Arani and Rann can recognize it right away. This droid has been set to attack anyone who enters the room. Only Siddle Frex, the leader of the smugglers, has the controller to turn it off. The training remote attacks the characters immediately.

HANDLING THE FIGHT

Proceed through the combat by taking turns.

Attacks: If a player's character attacks the training remote, the player rolls 1 twenty-sided die and adds the character's Attack bonus. The player needs a total of 16 or higher to hit.

Damage: Determine how much damage a character inflicts by rolling the damage dice listed on the character's sheet. Mark off the remote's wounds below. When you've marked all of its wound boxes, it's destroyed.

**REMOTE
WOUNDS: 4**

Force powers: Rann can use Force powers. When this happens, follow the instructions on Rann's character sheet. Rann can use a Force power instead of attacking.

The Remote's Turn: When all the players have acted, it's the remote's turn. The remote attacks a different character each turn. For each attack, roll 1 twenty-sided die and add 5. Check the Defense of the character it's attacking. If the result is equal to or higher than character's Defense, the remote hits. If it hits, roll 1 six-sided die for damage and subtract 3. If the result is less than 1, the character still marks off 1 wound. Have the player whose character was hit mark off damage; that character is now injured. When all of a character's wound boxes have been marked, he is dead (and can no longer act).

Description: As you play through the battle, describe the action: the remote whizzing through the air, skillfully dodging attacks made against it, and the sharp sting its weapon inflicts when a hero is hit.

STAR WARS

THE PREDATORS

BY JEFFREY L. HARRIS

After the remote has been destroyed, the players have some choices.

FREE TASRACH BOH

The cage containing Tasrach Boh has a simple electronic lock. If a hero wants to open the lock, a player needs to roll 1 twenty-sided die and add his character's Disable Device bonus. If the total is 8 or more, the lock opens.

TALK TO TASRACH BOH

Tasrach Boh is very grateful that the heroes have come to rescue him. He's an older, dignified man who is not used to dealing with smugglers or being imprisoned. As the GM, you play the role of Tasrach Boh for the short time he's involved with the players. You decide what actions he takes and what he says. Although Tasrach's pretty shaken up, he does his best to answer any of the heroes' questions.

Here are some questions characters might ask:

- » Who are you? "My name is Tasrach Boh. I'm a professor of archeology at the Naboo Royal House of Learning."
- » What are you doing here? "I spend a great deal of time looking at the ancient ruins of Naboo. I thought I saw some people moving equipment into this shrine and came to ask what they were doing. They captured me and shot my speeder."
- » Who are these people? "I have no idea what their names are, but I overheard their leader say they were planning to capture veermoks and sell them off world. I'm quite sure that's illegal!"
- » Who is their leader? "I only saw him briefly, but he is a large man in armor with a blaster pistol."
- » What do you want to do now? "I must get back to the House of Learning. By now my colleagues must be terribly worried about me. You four must finish rousting out this band of criminals before they hurt someone else!"

At the end of the conversation, Tasrach Boh leaves to take his speeder back to

Theed. Nothing the heroes say can convince him to remain here or help them. He's an elderly scholar, and not much good in a fight.

LOOKING AT THE BLASTER RIFLES

The two blaster rifles on the table are malfunctioning due to poor maintenance. If a hero wants to repair a rifle, a player needs to roll 1 twenty-sided die and add his or her character's Repair bonus. If the total is 15 or more, the character has repaired one rifle. A separate roll must be made for each rifle. A character can make only one attempt to fix each rifle.

A character using a blaster rifle does 3 eight-sided dice of damage instead of whatever damage he has listed for his own weapon.

If the heroes have already defeated Saidle Frex, this area is the end of the adventure. If they haven't, they'll need to backtrack to the power generator (Area 4) and proceed to the barracks (Area 6).

Area 6: The Barracks

The door opens into a small, cramped room. A single light has been bolted to the ceiling, providing dull illumination. Four broken statues sit in the corners of the room with sheets draped over them. There are five cots crammed into the room, with food, clothes, and trash scattered on, around, and under them. There is a thick smell of stale food and sweat. A single door at the far end of the room leads out.

The heroes can search the room, or they can proceed directly to Area 7: Saidle's Chamber.

SEARCHING THE ROOM

It takes several minutes for the heroes to search the room thoroughly. The only useful items the characters discover are four medpacs. Each medpac can restore 1 wound to one character. If a character uses a medpac, have his or her player erase one wound box from the character sheet. After a medpac has been used once, it's useless.

When the heroes move through the door, go to Area 7: Saidle's Chamber.

Area 7: Saidle's Chamber

After the heroes enter the room from the barracks (Area 6), read the following text:

You stand on a ledge in front of a deep crevice. A narrow metal catwalk spans the crevice, leading to a large open area. Many computers and consoles have been bolted to the walls. Dim lights hang from the ceiling. At the far end of the room, a large, armored figure stands with his back to you, looking at one of the computer screens. Beside him is a smuggler with a large vibro-ax in his hands.

The figures in the room are the mercenary Saidle Frex and the leader of the smugglers he's hired. As long as the characters don't make much noise and stay off the metal catwalk, Saidle and his underling are too involved with the computer to notice them. If the heroes haven't taken the blaster rifles from the storage room (Area 5) and the medpacs from the barracks (Area 6), they might be better off going back for them before taking on Saidle. However, the decision is up to the players. Let them decide what their characters want to do.

SNEAK AWAY

If the heroes haven't attracted the mercenary's attention, they can sneak away without difficulty.

CROSS THE CREVICE

The heroes can either rush across the narrow catwalk or jump over the crevice. If a player's character wants to jump across, that player rolls 1 twenty-sided die and adds his or her character's Jump bonus. If the total is 12 or higher, the character jumps across safely and can attack. If the total is less than 12, the character falls into the crevice. The character takes 1 six-sided die of wounds and must spend an action climbing out before doing anything else in the fight.

ATTACKING FROM THE LEDGE

Characters with a blaster or bowcaster may fire across the crevice without crossing it. If Rann is using his lightsaber, he must cross to attack. If the characters attack without crossing the crevice, Saidle and the smuggler come across the catwalk and fight back.

PUSH SOMEONE INTO THE CREVICE

If the fight takes place on the catwalk or near the ledge, a character may attempt to push a foe into the crevice. Pushing a foe is a two-step process. First, a player rolls 1 twenty-sided die and adds his or her character's Attack bonus. If the attack hits, the character does 1 four-sided die of damage. (If Rann attempts this, he may roll his normal lightsaber damage of 2 eight-sided dice).

If the attack succeeds, the player rolls 1 twenty-sided die again, this time adding the character's Push bonus. If the total is 15 or higher, the character pushes his or her foe into the crevice. Roll 1 six-sided die and mark off that many wounds. Before the foe can attack again, he must take one action to crawl out of the crevice.

HANDLING THE FIGHT

Proceed through the combat by taking turns.

Attacks: When a player's character attacks a foe, the player rolls 1 twenty-sided die and adds the character's Attack bonus. If a character attacks Saidle, the player needs to a total of 15 or higher to hit. When attacking the smuggler, only a 12 is required.

Damage: Determine how much damage a character does by rolling the dice listed on the character's sheet. Mark off the foe's wounds below. When you've marked all of a foe's wound boxes, he is dead (and can't take any more actions).

SMUGGLER BOSS
WOUNDS: 12

SAIDLE FREX
WOUNDS: 18

Force powers: Rann can use Force powers. When this happens, follow the instructions on Rann's character sheet. Rann can use a Force power instead of attacking.

The Opponents' Turn: When all the heroes have acted, Saidle and the smuggler get a turn. First, pick a target for the smuggler. He'll attack a character on the catwalk if possible. Because he's using a vibro-ax, he can't attack someone on the opposite side of the crevice. Roll 1

twenty-sided die and add 2. Check the Defense of the character he's trying to hit. If the total is equal to or higher than the character's Defense, the smuggler hit. Roll 2 ten-sided dice, and have the player mark that many wounds on his or her character sheet; that character is now injured. When all of a character's wound boxes have been marked, he or she is dead (and can no longer act).

Then pick a target for Saidle. Saidle attacks a different character than the smuggler. Roll 1 twenty-sided die and add 4. If Saidle's result is equal to or higher than the character's Defense, Saidle hit. Roll 3 six-sided dice, and have the player mark that many wounds off his character's sheet.

Using Medpacs: The heroes may have brought medpacs from Area 6. A medpac can restore 1 wound to one character. If a player uses a medpac, have him or her erase one of the character's wound boxes. After a medpac has been used once, it's useless.

Description: As you play through the battle, describe the action as you have in the previous fights. This is the climactic final scene of the adventure, and Saidle is the most dangerous opponent the heroes have faced yet. Dramatically describe the screech of blaster fire, the huge swings of the smuggler's vibro-ax, and Saidle's loud curses as he does battle with the heroes.

After the fight, the characters may choose from any of the actions below:

CHECK THE COMPUTER

The computer Saidle Frex was looking at contains information on his contacts in Theed, as well as his employers in Hutt Space. Although there isn't much the heroes can do with this information, it might be useful to Master Ali-Vor.

CHECK THE SMUGGLER

The smuggler's face is badly scarred under his facemask. He has a large vibro-ax in good working condition and 20 dataries. (These are Republic credits, used as money in the realm of space controlled by the Republic). A hero may decide to take the vibro-ax; it does 2 ten-sided dice of damage.

CHECK SAIDLE FREX

The mercenary has some scarred battle armor, a blaster pistol, and 50 dataries (Republic credits). He also has the controller to the training remote droid in Area 5: The Storage Room. If the characters have not yet destroyed the remote, they can use this controller to turn it off.

Congratulate your players. The heroes have defeated the veermok smugglers and rescued Tasrah Bohl!

Now What?

This fast-play game is a quick introduction to *Star Wars* roleplaying. Galaxies of adventure await you and your friends. In the *Star Wars Invasion of Theed Adventure Game*, your characters have more options, more equipment, and more Force powers, as well as more adversaries and adventures. After that, you may want to check out the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, which lets you create your own characters and adventures. The only limit to the game is your imagination.

Look for these products at a book or hobby store near you, or check out Wizards of the Coast's online store at www.wizards.com. ■



Rann I-Kanu

HUMAN JEDI GUARDIAN

Rann I-Kanu is the Padawan learner of Master All-Vor. He is a seeker of justice and defender of the innocent. In combat, Rann uses a lightsaber, the weapon of a Jedi. He is also strong in the Force and has Force powers he can use.

During an adventure, Rann protects his teammates and helps defeat enemies.

Actions

Rann may attempt any of the following actions. When he does, roll 1 twenty-sided die and add the indicated bonus (or subtract the listed penalty). The GM will tell you whether your total was high enough to succeed.

Combat

DAMAGE: 2 eight-sided dice

(with lightsaber)

If the GM tells you that Rann's lightsaber hit, roll 2 eight-sided dice. That's how much damage the lightsaber does.

DEFENSE: 15

A Joe who attacks Rann must roll a 15 or higher to hit.

WOUNDS: 13

Mark off these boxes as Rann takes damage. Rann dies if all the boxes are filled in.



Strategy

Rann is swift and skilled, able to deal a fair amount of damage with his lightsaber. He can also use Force powers in combat.

Force Powers

Rann can use these Force powers instead of attacking:

BATTLEMIND: This Force power enhances Rann's combat abilities. For the rest of the fight, Rann gains a +1 attack bonus. (That is, his attack bonus is +4 instead of +3.)

Using Force powers is tiring. Rann can use this power twice during the game. Mark off the Force power each time he uses it.

HEAL SELF: This Force power heals one of Rann's wounds. Roll 1 four-sided die and erase that many checked wound boxes

from Rann's character sheet when he uses this power.

Using Force powers is tiring. Rann can use this power twice during the game. Mark off the Force power each time he uses it.

SEE FORCE: This Force power allows Rann to know how many living creatures are in a room, even before he enters it.

Using Force powers is tiring. Rann can use this power twice during the game. Mark off the Force power each time he uses it.

Arani Korden

HUMAN SCOUNDREL

Arani is the daughter of a Naboo noble. She's confident and adventurous, always looking for excitement. She has a talent for getting into trouble ... and getting out of it.

During an adventure, Arani often deals with "tricky things," like security systems, computers, and traps.

Combat

DAMAGE: 3 four-sided dice

(with hold-out blaster)

If the GM tells you that Arani's blaster hit, roll 3 four-sided dice. That's how much damage the blaster does.

DEFENSE: 18

A Joe who attacks Arani must roll an 18 or higher to hit.

WOUNDS: 13

Mark off these boxes as Arani takes damage. Arani dies if all the boxes are filled in.



Strategy

Strategy: Arani can handle herself in a fight, but she's not the best fighter in the group. She's very fast and hard to hit, but doesn't deal damage as well as she avoids it. Her expertise with computers and security devices makes her the best choice for many other challenges the heroes will face.

Actions

Arani may attempt any of the following actions. When she does, roll 1 twenty-sided die and add the indicated bonus (or subtract the listed penalty). The GM will tell you whether your total was high enough to succeed.

Attack: +3 bonus
Disable Device: +7 bonus
Jump: +6 bonus
Push: +6 bonus
Repair: -10 penalty
Survival: +1 bonus
Computer Use: +5 bonus

Rorworr

WOOKIEE SCOUT

Rorworr is a Wookiee from the planet Kashyyyk. He is brave, loyal, and curious. Rorworr carries a bowcaster, a uniquely Wookiee weapon that no one else on the team is strong enough to use. Although he's not the most accurate combatant, Rorworr does tremendous damage.

Actions

Actions: Rorworr may attempt any of the actions listed below. When he does, roll 1 twenty-sided die and add the indicated bonus (or subtract the listed penalty). The GM will tell you whether your total was high enough to succeed.

Combat

DAMAGE:

3 ten-sided dice

(with bowcaster)
A bowcaster must be reloaded after every shot, so Rorworr can only attack every other turn. If the GM tells you that Rorworr's bowcaster hits, roll 3 ten-sided dice. That's how much damage the bowcaster does.

DEFENSE:

14

A foe who attacks Rorworr must roll a 15 or higher to hit.

WOUNDS:

14

Mark off these boxes as Rorworr takes damage. Rorworr dies if all the boxes are filled in.



Strategy

Rorworr is good at fixing things and identifying dangers in the wilderness. He's also a fair fighter, and can back up others in combat.

Galak

HUMAN SOLDIER

Galak is a native of Naboo and a volunteer in the Royal Security Service. He is very loyal to the people of Naboo, protecting them from criminals and enemies. He wears a combat jumpsuit, and his normal weapon is a blaster pistol. As a trained soldier, he is capable of using much larger weapons when called to do so.

During an adventure, Galak is very good with ranged weapons, providing fire support for the rest of his team.

Actions

Actions: Galak may attempt any of the following actions. When he does, roll 1 twenty-sided die and add the indicated bonus (or subtract the listed penalty). The GM will tell you whether your total was high enough to succeed.

DAMAGE:

3 six-sided dice

(with blaster)

If the GM tells you that Galak's blaster hit, roll 3 six-sided dice. That's how much damage the blaster does.

DEFENSE:

15

A foe who attacks Galak must roll a 15 or higher to hit.

WOUNDS:

13

Mark off these boxes as Galak takes damage. Galak dies if all the boxes are filled in.



Strategy

Galak is the best fighter in the group, with the most accurate attacks. He has armor on, making him reasonably difficult to hurt. He usually leads the team into combat. Because he's a soldier, he's expected to take on the toughest opponents.



The LAMBDA HEIST

BY PETER SCHWEIGHOFER • ILLUSTRATED BY MIKE VILARDI

"I'M AFRAID YOUR FREIGHTER'S IN PRETTY BAD CONDITION," THE SLICK TWI'LEK JELA'HAN INFORMS YOU.

He scans his datapad, looks over the damage the Imperials inflicted on your ship in that last encounter, and scans over the list of modifications you'd like. "The repairs, upgrades, and the false datawork to cover it all is going to cost you handsomely, my friends. And I know you're often short on hard credits. Unfortunately, so am I. I've already discussed obtaining the parts with Shellar—he can supply most of them from his junkyard east of Mos Eisley. But he made it quite clear he's going to charge us premium prices. He's also an entrepreneur, and would accept a trade-off of services in return for parts."

Shellar knows where you can acquire an Imperial Lambda-class shuttle. If you deliver it to him in one piece, he's willing to provide me the parts in advance, plus a credit bonus later to cover the cost of labor for the repairs, modifications, and your forged data permits for everything."

This all sounded so easy discussing it with

Jela'hant in Docking Bay 118, on the outskirts of Mos Eisley's warehouse district. But now that you're peering down at the Imperial scout outpost on Moorja, you're beginning to have second thoughts.

"The Lambda Heist" is a short adventure for the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* written for a band of four 6th-level heroes. As usual, their vessel requires repairs, they want a slew of modifications to their ship's systems, and they don't have the credits to pay for it all. But if they can shipjack a Lambda-class shuttle from a scout outpost and deliver it to a shady junkyard dealer, the heroes will have more than enough credits to pay the Twi'lek mechanic to make the repairs and modifications to their ship.

Plot Overview

The heroes find themselves in dire financial straits. Their ship requires repairs, and they want some modifications as well. Their Twi'lek contact Jela'hant requires a good deal of credits to make their vessel space-worthy again. The heroes find themselves stealing an Imperial shuttle for one of Jela'hant's suppliers, a starship junkyard king called Shellar.

The action begins in medias res as the heroes examine the scout post on Moorja,

planning their strategy for infiltrating the camp and hijacking the shuttle. They must avoid Imperial scout patrols and training drones and put their plan in motion. The outpost is actually an advanced scout training camp that cycles through a new scout unit every week. Once the shuttle arrives, it discharges new scout troopers for their week of refresher training, making the heroes' job of hijacking the vessel much more complicated.

When they fly the shuttle to Shellar's junkyard, they're rewarded with a credit voucher to cover Jela'hant's work on their ship. But the heroes and Shellar aren't the only ones interested in that Imperial shuttle—while they're handing over the vessel, a band of Rebel troopers springs an ambush in an attempt to shipjack the shuttle themselves! The heroes might stick around and help Shellar, or they can leave the scene with their reward.

Once back in Mos Eisley, they meet Jela'hant at a local watering hole, hand over the voucher, and head for their ship, docked in a nearby landing bay. They probably won't expect a surprise visit from the scout colonel from whom they stole the Lambda shuttle, who's waiting in the docking bay with some of his best scouts to teach the heroes a lesson.



Part I: Scout Base

Moorja is just another backwater planet in the Inner Rim, a world with a small agricultural and mining colony. Violent ion storms often disturb its upper atmosphere. Although these provide rain to nurture surface crops, they are hazardous for starship and airspeeder navigation.

Why the Empire established a scout outpost in one of Moorja's remote regions remains a mystery. A successful Knowledge (Empire) skill check (DC 30) reveals that the base was established as a political favor to an Imperial navy officer who hails from the planet, but nothing else can be learned. Most people in the main starport have no idea there is a scout facility here, although a small Imperial garrison maintains order in urban areas. It requires a Gather Information check (DC 30) just to find someone who knows that the base is there.

The scout outpost is not much of a base. It consists of a command bunker, two modular barracks, a shed for storing and repairing repulsorlift vehicles, and a landing zone marked out on a clear, flat area nearby. It's placed at the edge of crumpling badlands cut with steep canyons. The plain before it is covered with sickly bushes, providing anyone approaching the camp stealthily a +5

circumstance bonus to their Hide checks.

As the heroes survey the base, they notice one problem: there are plenty of scout troopers around, but no Lambda shuttle.

The Empire uses this outpost for training exercises, rotating squads from sector fleets through here weekly. And this week's batch of trainees is about to arrive in the shuttle that the heroes plan to capture.

Show the players the outpost map, and let them devise a plan. A Spot check (DC 20) reveals an Imperial Star Destroyer in orbit, and a tiny, shiny speck slowly descending toward their location: the Lambda shuttle.

The scout troopers occupy the center of

the compound, packing up foot lockers and stacking them at the landing zone. No one in the outpost is expecting the ship-jacking attempt.

Unfortunately, the route into the camp is guarded. The training camp uses modified probe droids to keep the scout troopers sharp—they serve as training opponents and detection devices during training exercises. If they raise an alarm, or cause anyone

Are You the Gamemaster?

Stop reading this adventure now if you intend to play it as one of the heroes. Reading even parts of "The Lambda Heist" will give away surprises that help make the scenario exciting to play.

If you are running this adventure as the Gamemaster, read the scenario at least once before playing it. The Plot Overview summarizes the opening situation and the events through which the heroes will stumble. Review the game rules for any stats and special abilities the adversaries might possess. As you run through the adventure in your head, think of any rules you might not fully understand, review them now, and you'll be much more prepared to run the scenario.

You can easily work "The Lambda Heist" into your smuggler campaigns any time the heroes' vessel needs major repairs and modifications. Feel free to substitute Jela'han, Shellar, and Colonel Gyrra for appropriate mechanics, parts dealers and Imperial adversaries in your own game. You can also alter the locations to suite your own campaign's regular settings.

You can even use this adventure in a Rebel campaign—just swap out the Rebel troopers who ambush the heroes at the junk yard and insert rival smugglers or agents of a crime lord who want the shuttle.

Don't worry how the heroes get to Moorja; if they ask, Shellar provided transport on an aging freighter, but once the heroes were in position, the pilot headed back to Tatooine.



JELAHAN, Male Twi'lek Scoundrel 6; Init +1 (Dex); Defense +8 (+7 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 29/12; Atk +4 melee (2d4, vibrodagger), +5 ranged (3d4, hold-out blaster); SQ illicit barter, better lucky than good, sneak attack; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 3; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 17.
Equipment: Comlink, datapad, hold-out blaster, robe and tunic, tool kit, vibrodagger.

Skills: Appraise +9, Bluff +8, Computer Use +7, Disable Device +9, Forgery +7, Gather Information +6, Hide +6, Knowledge (Business) +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Pilot +5, Profession (Engineer) +5, Profession (Mechanic) +6, Repair +12, Search +8, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +7.

Feats: Gearhead, Persuasive, Skill Emphasis (Repair), Stealthy, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Moorja Training Installation



To fire a weapon, the sound puts the entire outpost on combat alert. Sneaking up on the station is difficult, even with the bonus to Hide checks. The four droids each cover one side of the camp's perimeter.

Sneaking by one of the droids requires a Hide check opposed by the droid's Spot skill and a Move Silently check opposed by the droid's Listen skill. The droids must each monitor an 80-meter edge of the camp, so the heroes can get as far as 40 meters away from a droid when they attempt to sneak by. Remember to apply the usual penalties for distance to the droid's Spot and Listen checks. If the characters sneak between two droids, both droids get a chance to see and hear them.

If the training droids raise the alarm, the players are in a lot of trouble. The troopers immediately approach the area, find cover, and begin attacking the heroes. It takes the troopers four rounds to arrive once a droid raises the alarm or starts shooting. The other droids remain at their posts in case this attack is a feint by a larger force.

Should the heroes manage to sneak past the droids, they'll be safe unless they move into a position with line of sight with the troopers. Any time one of the heroes has line of sight with a trooper, he or she must make a Hide check opposed by the trooper's Spot skill.

The shuttle arrives shortly after the heroes make it on to the base. The boarding

ramp lowers and eight scout troopers march down with an Imperial officer: Colonel Dyrra, commander of this small base.

The trainees leaving the base don't waste any time gathering their gear and heading for the shuttle—unless, of course, the heroes

have turned the area into a combat zone.

The heroes have three options: attack the scout troopers, sneak onto the shuttle, or make a dash for the shuttle.

If the heroes attack, the scout troopers and Colonel Dyrra take cover and fire back. If they attempt to sneak onto the shuttle, they must make Hide checks opposed by the scout trooper's Spot skills. If the heroes make a dash to the shuttle, they'll be seen automatically, but they can begin the ensuing combat on the landing pad beside the shuttle, allowing them an easy escape into its hold.

Once inside the shuttle, the heroes must clear the cockpit. Unfortunately, the cockpit entry hatch is wide enough for only one person. Inside sit two Imperial pilots, one who turns to see who's at the hatch (the pilot), and another hunched over the controls (the co-pilot). If the co-pilot survives the first round of combat with the heroes, he gets a chance to initialize the shuttle's self-destruct programming.

If the co-pilot activates the self-destruct mechanism, the characters have six rounds to disengage it, requiring a successful

IMPERIAL FORCES

IMPERIAL SCOUT TROOPER (16), Male
Human Scout 3: Init +2 (Dex); Defense 16 (+4 armor, +2 Dex); Spd 6m; VP/WP 16/10; Atk +3 melee (1d3, unarmed), +5 ranged (2d8, blaster rifle); SQ Trailblazing, Uncanny Dodge; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 1, Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10; Challenge Code B.
Equipment: Hold-out blaster, blaster pistol, blaster rifle, scout armor, survival gear.
Skills: Climb +3, Computer Use +2, Hide +3, Jump +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Pilot +5, Repair +3, Search +4, Spot +5, Survival +4.
Feats: Track, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons).

IMPERIAL SHUTTLE PILOTS (2), Male
Human Soldier 3: Init +1 (Dex); Defense 14 (+3 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 23/12; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1, unarmed), ranged +4 (2d6, blaster pistol); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 1, Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10; Challenge Code B.
Equipment: Blaster pistol, Imperial flight uniform.

Skills: Astrogate +7, Computer Use +7, Demolitions +7, Pilot +8, Repair +7.
Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, heavy), Quick Draw, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, repeating blasters, simple weapons, vibroweapons).

TRAINING PROBE DROID (4): Hovering military training droid, Scout 2; Init +0; Defense 14 (+4 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP 16/14; Atk +1 ranged (3d6, stun cannon); SQ: Trailblazing; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +4; SZ M; Rep 0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10; Challenge Code B.

Equipment: Locked access, improved sensor package, infrared vision, low-light vision, telescopic vision, comlink, recording unit, stun cannon.

Skills: Hide +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Search +5, Spot +5.
Feats: Skill Emphasis (Spot), Track.

Demolitions check (DC 15). If the self-destruct sequence is not disarmed, use the Exploding Vehicles rules from Chapter 10 of the core rulebook.

Once the heroes gain control of the shuttle, they can ignore the ground troops and blast off. If any of the scout troopers are alive, they immediately alert the star destroyer in orbit. The destroyer in turn alerts two TIE fighters on patrol nearby. By the time the heroes take off in the shuttle and begin accelerating, the TIE fighters begin attacking. The fighters begin the encounter flying at attack speed at long range. They quickly close and begin attacking.

The swiftest escape from the fighters is to fly directly through the storm. Characters can realize this by making a Knowledge, Physical Sciences check (DC 15) to figure out the ion storm's effect on ship sensors. Flying through the storm brings the shuttle into a roiling mass of clouds frequently split by bright-blue ion lightning. Visibility is considerably reduced, and the ion energy distorts sensor readings. It takes the shuttle five rounds to punch through the storm and another three to escape Moorja's gravity well and line up a hyperspace jump. For each round within the storm, there's a 1-in-6 chance ion lightning hits a ship (including the pursuing TIE fighters), ionizing one ship's system for 1d6 rounds. Roll 1d6 to see which ship system

lock on the shuttle. Make a Computer Use check for both pilots (DC 11 based on a small craft) with the appropriate range modifier (page 174 of the core book) and a -8 circumstance penalty due to the ion storm's interference. During any round in which a TIE fighter's sensors are inoperable, it automatically loses contact with the shuttle.

The Star Destroyer is not within range to engage the shuttle.

After escaping Moorja, the heroes must head to Tatooine to deliver the shuttle. Since Shellar is willing to supply the heroes with a known navigational route, the Astrogation check to travel between the systems is DC 10.

Part 2: Shellar's Junkyard

Once they reach Tatooine, the heroes can plot a course for Mos Eisley. Shellar's junkyard is six miles outside the city. When the heroes arrive, they find a maze of half-buried starships, mountains of spare parts, and junked repulsorlift vehicles. A tattered flag flutters at the far end where several gangs of Jawas and Gamorreans are working amid the wreckage.



As the shuttle circles overhead, the Gamorreans peer up and direct the heroes to land near the fluttering flag. Shellar holds court there in the shade cast by a half-buried freighter. He's a short fellow in greasy mechanic's coveralls, lounging on an impromptu throne constructed from an engine nacelle. As the shuttle sets down nearby, a small crowd of chattering Jawas and grunting Gamorreans gathers.

Rebel soldiers are hiding among the debris piled along the junkyard's perimeter, 20m away from the center of the junkyard. Once they've landed, allow the heroes a Spot check (opposed by the Rebels' Hide skill) with a -5 penalty for distance.

"Greetings, friends," Shellar says as they descend the shuttle's boarding ramp. "I see you've been successful in acquiring the shuttle. Jela'hun will also be pleased—I hear he's been working hard upgrading your own

DB ROLL	STORM DAMAGES
1	Ion drives
2	Weapons systems
3	Shields
4	Maneuverability thrusters
5	Sensors
6	Nav computer

Ion lightning knocks out:

(For TIE fighters hit by ion lightning, ignore the "Shields" or "Nav computer" results and roll again.)

For each round the ion drives are down, the shuttle adds one more round to the time it takes to clear the storm or reach hyperspace. If the nav computer is ionized, it takes an extra three rounds to make hyperspace once the shuttle leaves the storm.

While in the ion storm, the TIE fighter pilots must roll each round to keep a sensor

VEHICLE DATA

IMPERIAL LAMDA-CLASS SHUTTLE
Craft: Sienar Fleet Systems Lambda-class Imperial Shuttle; Class: Transport; Size: Small (20 m long); Crew: 2 (Skilled +4); Passengers: 10; Cargo Capacity: 80 metric tons; Consumables: 2 months; Hyperdrive: x1 (backup x10); Maximum Speed: Ramming; Defense: 16 (+1 size, +5 armor); Shield Points: 50; Hull Points: 120; DR: 5. Weapon: Double blaster cannons [3]; Fire Arc: 2 front, 1 back; Attack Bonus: +9 (+1 size, +4 crew, +4 fire control); Damage: 2d10x2; Range Modifiers: PB +0, S +0, M -2, L -4.
Weapon: Double Laser Cannons (2 fire-linked); Fire Arc: Front; Attack Bonus: +12 (+4 size, +4 crew, +4 fire control); Damage: 5d10x2; Range Modifiers: PB +0, S -2, M/L n/a.

TIE FIGHTER

Craft: Sienar Fleet Systems TIE/ln; Class: Starfighter; Size: Diminutive (6.3 m long); Crew: 1 (Skilled +4); Passengers: None; Cargo Capacity: 65 kg; Consumables: 2 days; Hyperdrive: None; Maximum Speed: Ramming; Defense: 24 (+4 size, +10 armor); Shield Points: None; Hull Points: 60; DR: 5. Weapon: Laser cannons (2 fire-linked); Fire Arc: Front; Attack Bonus: +12 (+4 size, +4 crew, +4 fire control); Damage: 5d10x2; Range Modifiers: PB +0, S -2, M/L n/a.

The Lambda Heist

Docking Bay 11B



freighter." The friendly Human vigorously shakes everyone's hand, then begins walking around the shuttle, inspecting his new prize (and noting any damage from its confrontation with the TIE fighters during the escape from Moorja).

When he's satisfied, he hands the lead hero a datapad. "This contains a document releasing Jela'han from the debt on the parts I sent him," Shellar says. "He'll also find confirmation that sufficient credits have been transferred to his account to cover his work fees on your ship, plus a little extra. All in all I'd say you folks just earned yourselves a very good deal."

If the heroes hold out for more credits for themselves, Shellar calls over a few menacing Gamorreans brandishing pary-

REBEL FORCES

REBEL TROOPERS (8), Male Human Soldier z: Init +2 (Dex); Def 16 (+4 armor, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 18/12; Atk +3 melee (1d3+1, unarmed), +4 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Dodge; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; 52 M; FP 0; DSP 0; Rep 0; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Equipment: Blast vest and helmet, blaster pistol, comlink. **Skills:** Demolitions +2, Hide +3, Repair +2, Spot +3, Treat Injury +2, Computer Use +2.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium). **Weapon Group Proficiency** (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, repeating blasters, simple weapons, vibroweapons).

bars and heavy torsion spanners. He claims the deal was all set with Jela'han, but he's willing to give them each 100 credits for their troubles. Shellar explains the heroes can take one of his older speeders back into Mos Eisley. One of the Jawas drives up a beat-up old landspeeder. He says Jela'han is expecting to meet them in a familiar cantina (apparently

one they frequent while in town).

Should anyone ask about the soldiers prowling around the camp's perimeter, Shellar sends one of the Gamorreans to investigate. If none of the heroes see the Rebels, allow each of the Gamorreans and Jawas a chance to Spot the Rebels. If no one sees the Rebels while the heroes are at the junkyard, they wait until the heroes have left to attack.

If a fight erupts, Shellar and his six Jawas assistants dash for the shuttle as the Gamorreans attempt to fight the Rebels with melee weapons. The six Gamorreans will have a tough time against the Rebels'

blasters, so unless the heroes intervene, Shellar will likely lose his new ship. The heroes can stick around for this confrontation, or can make a hasty exit in the beat-up landspeeder. The Rebels don't shoot at anyone who isn't blocking their way or shooting back. Should they stay to defeat the Rebels, the heroes receive a reward of an additional 100 credits from a grateful Shellar.

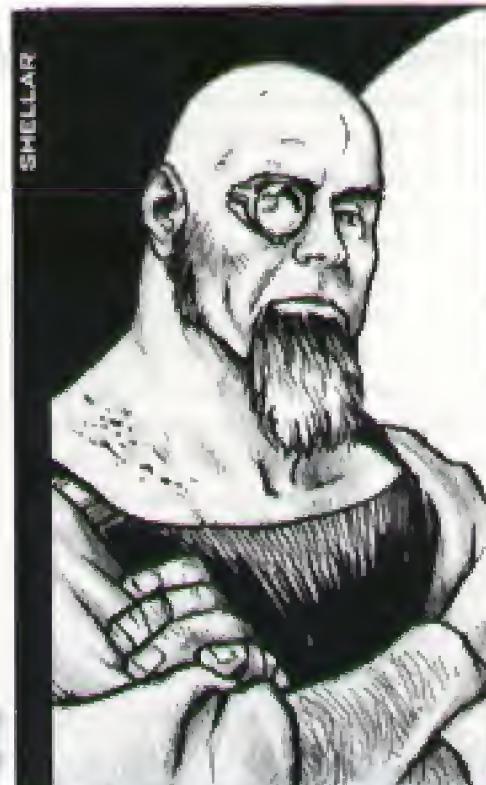
Part 3: Double-Cross

After leaving the junkyard, the heroes head to Mos Eisley. If they want to sell the beat-up speeder that Shellar let them use, they find it's nearly worthless; any reputable repulsorlift dealer will offer them around 100 credits. The heroes find Jela'han waiting for them in a familiar booth at their favorite cantina.

After inspecting the datapad from Shellar, he declares the deal complete.

Heroes who make a Spot check (DC 20) notice that Jela'han looks weary. If questioned, he explains that he and his technical crew worked hard to have the repairs and modifications finished in time for their return. The work was extensive, and the Twi'lek had to help the small team of mechanics he usually supervises.

With the payment voucher delivered and debts on the starship *forgiven*, Jela'han seems relieved. He escorts the heroes to their ship, still berthed in Docking Bay 11B on the edge of the city's warehouse district.



SHELLAR, Male Human Scoundrel 4: Init +2 (Dex); Defense +18 (+6 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 25/12; Atk +3 melee (1d4, knife), +5 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Illicit barter, better lucky than good; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1; 52 M; FP 0; Rep 2; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, comlink, datapad, greasy coveralls, knife.

Skills: Appraise +4, Astrogate +2, Bluff +6, Computer Use +1, Demolitions +2, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +2, Disguise +4, Forgery +4, Gather Information +6, Hide +5, Knowledge (Business) +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Pilot +5, Repair +2, Search +5, Sleight of Hand +2, Spot +4.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Persuasive, Skill Emphasis (Gather Information), Spacer, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

As they approach, they see that the Twi'lek took care to keep their ship's landing ramp closed to discourage intruders. But after entering the bay and nearing the boarding hatch, someone shouts "Halt!" from behind the numerous cargo crates and fusion generator supply tanks around the docking bay's edge. Six Imperial scout troopers slowly rise from behind their cover, blaster rifles drawn. An Imperial officer, Colonel Dyrro, stands among them. "Throw down your weapons and surrender," he calls. "You're under arrest for ship-jacking an Imperial shuttle."

The heroes are only meters from their vessel's entry ramp, but those few meters are a long way to run with no cover.

Dyrro's an ex-scout who doesn't like being humiliated by vagabonds like the heroes. He's carefully deployed his scouts

behind one-half cover, giving them a +4 Defense bonus and a +2 Reflex save bonus. Dyrro knows, however, that once the heroes board their freighter, he and his troopers better scatter. Anyone in the ship's ventral gun can quickly clear the docking bay of any opposition—and probably take out most of the bay itself.

Assuming both the heroes and Colonel Dyrro escape alive, the heroes have earned the Imperial officer's life-long hatred, a vendetta he'll pursue despite his demotion and reassignment to some demeaning post in a remote region of the galaxy.

Rewards

Assuming everyone actively participated in the operation to shipjack the shuttle, deliver it to Shellar, and fend off the scout troopers while they escaped to their ship,

Who Betrays Them?

There are two good choices for who betrays the heroes, Jela'hon and Shellar. It's up to the Gamemaster to choose the traitor.

Shellar: Shellar is a blend of thug, merchant, and would-be tyrant. If he's the traitor, he either did it to save his own skin or for profit.

Jela'hon: Jela'hon is a more complex character. The mechanic could be working for the Empire as a regular informant, have a personal debt against one of the heroes, or simply want to find a way to keep the heroes ship for himself.

What If?

What if they decide to sell the shuttle somewhere else? No problem. You could create an entire series of adventures for the smugglers to find, negotiate with, and sell the shuttle to an interested party—most likely the Rebel Alliance (which has meager financial resources) or a devious crime lord. Just remember, Jela'hon's not happy about all the credits he now owes Shellar, and he, or the Empire, have probably captured their beloved freighter.

What if they decide to keep the shuttle? It is not a great idea, but it's their hides at stake. Jela'hon, Shellar, and the Empire are all furious with the heroes, and someone's taken the heroes' freighter. The Empire issues a bounty for the heroes termination and the shuttle's return.

What if they give the shuttle to the Rebel Alliance? A very nice gesture, but it still means Jela'hon, Shellar, and the Empire are all mad at the heroes. A bounty's not an easy living to live with... especially if their past smuggling contacts try to make a fast credit by turning them in.

What if they suspect a docking bay ambush? Dyrro's scouts were surprised once, but not a second time. If the heroes try climbing the docking bay walls or entering through a side door, an Imperial scout in civilian clothes wandering nearby notices and sends a warning on his comlink.

What if they don't trust Jela'hon and take him hostage? This doesn't mean they're getting their ship back too easily. Colonel Dyrro and his scout troopers take care of that at the docking bay. Besides, Dyrro has no love for Jela'hon, and would just as soon see the Twi'lek dead. And if the characters wait too long, the Empire might not decide to ambush them, but could simply break into the ship and impound it in some high-security Imperial installation somewhere.

divide 2,000 XP times the average level of the group (should be around 6th) among the heroes.

The heroes also receive any additional credits they managed to convince Shellar to award them for their troubles in obtaining the shuttle.

If they decided to keep the shuttle, the heroes must find a way to either sell the vessel or find a way to keep the Empire from recognizing the craft and confiscating it. ■



Colonel Dyrro, Male Human Scout:
Init +3 (Dex); Def 19 (+6 class, +3 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 5/11; Atk +5 melee (1d3, punch), +8 ranged (2d6, blaster pistol); SQ Trailblazing, Uncanny Dodge, Skill Mastery (Gather Information); SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +5; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 2; Rep 2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.
Equipment: Blaster pistol, comlink, Imperial officer's uniform.

Skills: Astrogation +4, Bluff +7, Climb +2, Demolitions +4, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +4, Gather Information +6, Hide +7, Intimidate +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Pilot +8, Repair +3, Search +4, Speak Rodian, Spot +5, Survival +5, Computer Use +4.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Persuasive, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Track, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons).



Snow Job

THE FROZEN WORLD OF ANDO PRIME PLAYS HOST TO THE ANDO OVERLAND, ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS PODRACES OUTSIDE OF THE BOONTA EVE CLASSIC.

Like most Podraces, it is sponsored and organized by the notorious Huttis of the Desilijic clan on Tatooine. Recently, a rival gangster named Kaeline Ungasan has established a cross-country Podrace on Ando Prime to try to win popularity and a portion of the Hutt clan's gambling profits. While gamblers wait to see how the power struggle plays out, Podracer pilots looking for a new thrill flock to the event. A Twi'lek noble, Jer Blankuna, contacts the heroes. He requests that the heroes meet him on Alderaan, promising a reward for the recovery of his missing son, Ree. Jer Blankuna fears that Ree has become entangled in the death-defying sport of Podracing; however, this is far from the truth!

"Snow Job" is a *Star Wars* Roleplaying Game adventure for four 3rd-level heroes set during the *Rise of the Empire* era. It provides a mix of combat, adventure, and investigation. For a party of five or six, the heroes should be 2nd level. For larger parties, increase the number of Trolls to six, or add a couple random encounters in Mos Espa or Elesia. This adventure can also be used as a launching point for a *Rise of the Empire* era campaign. If starting a campaign with 1st-level heroes, reduce the number of Trolls to two and decrease the power of the thugs in the Tatooine encounter.

You might want to review the effects of extreme heat and cold, covered in Chapter 12 of the *Star Wars* Roleplaying Game, as both come into play during this adventure.

BY DANIEL KAUFMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY MATTHEW HATTON

Adventure Synopsis

"Snow Job" leads the heroes on a search for Ree, the son of a Twi'lek noble. Over the course of the adventure, they discover that nothing is what it seems. The Twi'lek noble works for the Desilijic clan, while Ree (who is not, in fact, the Twi'lek noble's son) works for a rival crime lord.

The first part of the adventure takes the heroes to Tatooine in search of Ree, where they encounter mercenary forces working for the Corporate Sector Authority (CSA). The CSA is keeping tabs on Ree's employer, Kaeline Ungasan, a CSA employee and crime lord attempting to usurp some of the Desilijic clan's control over gambling profits.

The heroes travel to Ando Prime and discover that a Podracing event staged there—the Ungasan Cross Country—is actually a front for an illegal mining operation. Naturally, the Desilijic clan gets involved, and the natives add an unexpected wrinkle.

The final encounter takes place in an icy canyon where the opposing forces converge to decide who controls the icy fields of Ando Prime.

Adventure background

Few things on the desolate ice planet of Ando Prime are worth having, but the income from the Podracing season is one of them. Previous overt attempts by the Corporate Sector Authority to gain a financial



hold in Ando Prime have failed, so the CSA has adopted a different tactic: control from within. Kaeline Ungasan, a mid-level CSA employee, has begun to undercut the Desilljic clan's influence on Ando Prime.

Ungasan has set up a rival Podrace—the Ungasan Cross Country—hoping to divert income from the Hutt and sway the loyalties of the Ando Prime Podracers. Unlike other Podraces, the Ungasan Cross Country starts from a different place each time, providing new, exciting courses and avoiding Desilljic reprisals. Betting takes place over the HoloNet, and the race is broadcast over secured bands to audience members who pay a membership fee. This strategy seems to be working.

The Hutt are understandably displeased with Ungasan's success. However, Ungasan is well protected and well funded, and populations on Ando Prime are too spread out for the Hutt to simply shoot all of his supporters. So, the Hutt plan to crush their new rival through manipulation.

The Desilljic clan has set up Jer Blankuna and his wife to lure a group of gullible do-gooders into looking for their lost "son," Ree. In truth, Jer Blankuna has no son. The do-gooders are a screen so that Ungasan does not see the Desilljic clan's mercenaries coming. Once the heroes find Ree, the mercenaries plan to use Ree to lead them to Ungasan.

Ree was a decent independent Podracer for a short time, but he grew dissatisfied with Desilljic clan money-skimming and the attitude that Podracer pilots were disposable. When Ungasan offered a better deal for less risk, he immediately took it. Now he works as Ungasan's chief scout for race locations. During one scouting expedition, Ree found traces of Voniun, a precious metal used in several types of behavioral chips for upper-end droid models. Mining a major vein of Voniun would be quite a bit more profitable than Podraces.

Ree informed Ungasan, and they immediately hatched a plan. Ungasan wants to mount a "quick strike" mining operation if they can find the deposit's exact location. This would save the trouble of purchasing the actual mining rights or buying the land. Once mined, Ungasan could use the

profits from the Voniun to kickstart his criminal enterprises without his CSA managers knowing.

Ree has rigged scanning equipment, specifically calibrated to locate Voniun, and attached it to various exterior Podracer parts, the kind most likely to get knocked off in a race. To entice the Podracer pilots to use the doctored parts, he sells them through channels at huge discounts, then after each race scavenges the courses for dislodged scanning equipment. The pilots have no idea about the scanning equipment, of course. They get cheap parts, and Ree gets scans of areas he needs to supply mining information to Ungasan. Ree, of course, chooses the Podracer course based on the most likely sites of Voniun deposits. Ree currently needs to scavenge several scanners out of some wrecked Podracers from a recent race.

The Desilljic clan is unaware of Ungasan's connection to the CSA, but they think he's a criminal upstart. The CSA is largely unaware of Ungasan's criminal aspirations. This is the cauldron into which the heroes are tossed.

Hero Hooks

A noble hero might know Jer Blankuna socially and discover his problem at a charity function. Jer Blankuna has informants everywhere. Any friar, scoundrel, scout, or soldier might hear the news that a rich Twi'lek wants a job done. The Jedi Council might contact a Jedi hero as a favor to Jer Blankuna. As an interesting note, the Jedi Council might even know of, or at least suspect, Jer Blankuna's deception but not inform the Jedi hero as an opportunity to teach a Padawan to think on his or her feet.

Somehow, Jer Blankuna contacts the heroes and asks for their help. He arranges for a YT-1300 transport, the *Flyer*, to bring the heroes to his home on Alderaan to talk about it. The adventure begins there.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Before they meet him, heroes might want to learn more about their prospective employer. Gathering information on Jer Blankuna is relatively easy, though information is sparse. The Blankuna family is quite well known, and information is available on

them, but not as much as one might expect to find on such public figures. A successful Gather Information check (DC 15) uncovers a brief history of how they earned their fortune (shipping), a few public appearances (mostly charity functions), and some typical family gossip. Although gossip about the family is sparse, the rumors seem to indicate that the family is secluded and eccentric.

Meeting Jer Blankuna

The Blankuna mansion orbits Alderaan. It is a splendid, ornate structure built into an asteroid pulled into orbit by a tractor beam. This sort of extravagance is apparent throughout the mansion. The heroes' ship touches down in the landing bay, where two Human servants and a protocol droid wait to greet them. The servants

Cast of Characters

Jer Blankuna and his wife, Gehine: These Twi'leks are loyal to the Desilljic clan and set the adventure in motion.

Ree: This Twi'lek scout works for (and is loyal to) Kaeline Ungasan, one of the Desilljic clan's gangster thugs. Ree's actions and reactions are revealed in the encounter with him on Ando Prime.

Kaeline Ungasan: A powerful figure in the CSA, Ungasan considers himself an up-and-coming crime lord. He has few morals, no loyalties, and the political clout to be a fearsome enemy. Although he isn't planning to take a direct hand in the illegal mining operation that is beginning on Ando Prime, he will remember anyone who spoils it.

Benkudi: A short-sighted Dug mercenary, Benkudi is a casual friend of Ree's. He has worked for both the Hutt and Ungasan in the past, but has no loyalties. He cares only about money and acquiring more of it.

Geon Justle: Head of the mining union in the town of Uesa on Ando Prime, Justle is a bigger dupe than Benkudi. Bought off by Ungasan, he looks out solely for himself. If confronted by force or the legal system, he attempts to buy himself a better deal.

SNOW JOB

are instructed to show the heroes to the dining room.

The heroes are introduced to Jer Blankuna and Gelune by the servants who then depart to begin serving dinner. Jer and Gelune Blankuna seem anxious, but are gracious hosts and engage the heroes in small talk throughout the meal. Toward the end of the meal, Gelune begins sobbing quietly and then excuses herself. This is Jer Blankuna's cue.

Jer Blankuna, seeing his wife depart, dismisses the servants. Then he closes the doors to the room. He sits down again and sighs heavily. "This... this whole ordeal has been outrageously taxing on my dear wife," he says languidly.

He pulls a datapad from a pocket and hands it to the nearest hero. The datapad screen has a picture of a young adult Twilek next to a Podracer. He motions for you all to look. "This is a picture of our son, Ree. He is our only child, and precious to both my wife and me. This is him with his Podracer. Ree enjoyed zooming about on those terrible contraptions. He claimed to love the danger of racing—oh, I'm talking about him the past tense... we must keep up hope that he's alive, isn't that right?" Jer Blankuna draws a deep breath and lets it out slowly.

"We kept him sheltered from the public eye. There are such terrible things out there." His lekku (head-tails) jitter with anxiety. "We've both been worried sick since his disappearance. Where could he have gone? Was his life so horrible? Perhaps... perhaps if we had not held him so tightly..." His voice trails off in regret.

"I'm sorry, I'm barely making sense. It's just that... Ree has disappeared. He's done this before of course, sneaking off to race, but this time he's been gone for two weeks, and we... well, we think something might have happened to him. My wife and I would both be enormously relieved if you could locate Ree and bring him back to us... or at least let us know where he is."

"We need someone we can trust to do that. Will you do it?"

The Twilek leans forward. "I can pay, of course. I'll give you two hundred credits a day, plus expenses. Do you want any up front? Here," he places a creditstick on the table. "This is five hundred credits. Is that enough? Will you find my Ree?"

Jer Blankuna is an artful liar. He can summon and project the emotion of sadness well enough to misdirect anyone probing him with the Empathy Force skill. Even successful Sense Motive checks against his Bluff skill only reveals that he might be hiding something, but not what.

Jer Blankuna deflects any pointed questions with his mask of grief. If any hero probes too deeply or seems continually suspicious, he begins to weep and presses the other heroes for an answer.

If heroes wish to negotiate prices, Jer Blankuna agrees to any reasonable amount the heroes suggest, as he has no intention of paying. When they have agreed to help him, Jer Blankuna continues.

"Here's the information we have. Two days ago a Dug named Benkudi contacted us. Benkudi lives in a city called Mos Espa on a planet called Tatooine. He says that he saw our son there. You should begin your investigation there. I think they have Podraces on this... Tatooine planet. Here, take this datapad with his holovid. Please, go quickly. Please find my son."

If the heroes do not have their own ship, Jer Blankuna supplies the heroes' ship with any reasonable equipment they request. If in doubt, use the heroes' combined maximum starting credits as a guideline. Jer Blankuna also supplies a pilot, if necessary.

In addition to a holovid of Ree, the datapad also holds hyperspace coordinates for Tatooine so the heroes can leave immediately. Less conspicuously, the datapad contains a short-range tracer. The tracer chip is blended with the workings of the datapad, and it's hard to find. Any hero who opens the datapad can spot the tracer with a successful Repair check (DC 20). Removing or tinkering with it requires a second Repair check (DC 20). Since it is so well blended with the workings of the datapad, removing the tracer disables the entire datapad.

The tracer sends a signal to a group of mercenaries hired by the Hutt. The mercenaries have orders to capture Ree when they find him and get rid of any "loose ends" (the heroes). The mercenaries track the characters discretely, but doggedly. Every six hours the heroes are on any planet they have a chance to spot a suspicious character following them. This requires a successful Spot check against the mercenary's Hide check. As professionals, the mercenaries follow from a distance of at least 20 meters (farther in open areas), giving heroes at least a -5 penalty to Spot checks.

RESEARCHING REE

Once away from Jer Blankuna, heroes might want to do more research on Jer Blankuna's "son." A successful Gather Information skill check (DC 18) turns up a handful of files mentioning Ree, including a charity event plus two pleasure trips to Coruscant and Aquilaris. The files are false, planted by the Hutt as part of the ruse.

With a successful Computer Use check (DC 13) heroes can find a picture of Ree preparing his Podracer in connection with the Boonta Eve Classic from a year ago. If the heroes show this picture to Jer Blankuna, he looks aghast. He claims no knowledge of Ree being in that race but sorrowfully admits that Ree could have "sneaked off" to the Boonta Eve Classic without his knowledge.

ARRIVING ON TATOOINE

Sooner or later, the heroes will set off for Tatooine. After their ship exits hyperspace, permission is given to land at Mos Espa, a riotously crowded spaceport surrounding by outlying moisture farms. Heroes can find a place to stay at one of several boarding houses on the perimeter of the landing area. Finding Benkudi is a little harder. For the most part, no one knows or is willing to talk. However, Mos Espa is not that big. A few hours of surveillance and a successful Search check (DC 15) turns up Benkudi's loping gait eventually.

THE INVESTIGATION

Gathering specific information on Tatooine is hard. Learning anything about the likes of Benkudi or Ungasan requires a successful Gather Information check (DC 15). Contin-

ued failure or aggressive nosiness draws the attention of local authorities, most of whom work for the Hutt. They have only one response: arrest. Luckily, the Desilijic clan-controlled authorities are open to bribes. (If the heroes are arrested, you might have them make Diplomacy or Bluff checks to escape the situation or roleplay the encounter as you see fit.)

MEETING BENKUDI

Once the heroes have looked around and made the appropriate skill checks, read the following:

Up ahead a Dug scampers from three thugs. None have visible weapons, but they obviously intend to inflict grievous physical harm on their victim. The Dug runs into a narrow alley and the thugs follow.

The thugs are CSA contract workers, hired by Ungasan. They wish to threaten Benkudi and keep him quiet about Ando Prime Podracing. Heroes who make a successful Listen check (DC 13) can hear one thug threaten the Dug, "You don't know anything about Podraces off Tatooine, right? You've never even been off this rock, right? And you have no business talking about places you never been, like say, Ando Prime, right? You might fall and hurt yourself if you keep flapping your jaw about places you've never been." Then the thugs begin to drive the warning home with their fists.

The heroes might want to rescue the Dug from his assailants. If so, they will have a fight on their hands. All three thugs carry concealed vibrodaggers. Vibrodaggers are illegal here, but the thugs know that law is a fluid concept in Mos Espa. They fight until one of them is dead or unconscious, at which point the other two attempt to flee. Assuming the heroes capture the thugs, they do not identify their employer. If questioned about their assault, they only say that Benkudi owes them money. If the heroes make a successful Intimidate check (DC 25), they learn that the thugs work for Kaeline Ungasan.

TALKING TO BENKUDI

After his rescue, Benkudi identifies himself and "plays innocent." While gruff, he

becomes quite helpful once the heroes reveal they work for Jer Blankuna. He even offers to buy them drinks at a local cantina.

Benkudi is a willing stoolie. This gets him beat up a lot but also it makes him useful to all sorts of people. For only a little money (100 credits) he'll tell almost everything he knows above Ree to a friendly hero.

After they hand over the money, Benkudi gives the heroes information about the new Podrace on Ando Prime:

- » The Podrace is called the Ungasan Cross Country.
- » The course changes with each race.
- » The last known race location was the Juaka Canyon, near the outpost of Elesa.
- » The next race won't be held for at least two weeks.
- » He has no idea where the next race will take place.
- » The founder of the race, Kaeline Ungasan, is cutting into the gambling profits of the Huts of the Desilijic clan.

Benkudi has no information on Ungasan, other than that he was formerly a lieutenant of the Desilijic clan. (This is false, but Benkudi doesn't know this. Ungasan actually dealt with the Hutt through Corporate channels).

For another 50 credits, Benkudi shows the heroes how the Podrace is broadcast over secure channels and how to use their computer to bet on the Cross County Podrace.

After learning of the computerized betting system and secure transmission of the Podrace, heroes can break into the transmissions, but this is difficult. Breaking into the computerized betting system requires a successful Computer Use check (DC 28). Breaking into the broadcast channel is easier, requiring a successful Computer Use check (DC 20). However, the broadcast channel has nothing on it until the day of the race.

A successful Sense Motive check (opposed by Benkudi's Bluff check) tells the heroes

that the Dug is hiding something more. If the heroes confront him with the notion that he's hiding something else, he'll try to sell the information for another 300 credits. Alternately, with a successful Intimidate skill check (DC 15), the Dug gives them the information for free.

Benkudi knows about the mining scam on Ando Prime from a conversation with Ree. He had planned to sell this information to the Hutt, who are keen to have legal grounds to ruin the man behind the rival Podrace. Though they are loose friends, Ree knows Benkudi's talkative nature, and warned Kaeline Ungasan. Ungasan sent thugs to prevent Benkudi from revealing his knowledge to anyone else.

If the heroes ask, Benkudi knows nothing about Ree's parents. Ree doesn't strike him as a runaway rich kid, but they're not that close. "Maybe he's got some hoity-toity aristocrat parents," he says. "Wouldn't that be a kick? Heh!"

Benkudi doesn't have any more information for the heroes, but he'll gladly continue making up stories as long as they give him money. Eventually, his stories get ridiculous enough that even the most gullible heroes won't believe him. At that point, he thanks them for their time and leaves quickly.



SNOW JOB

TALKING TO THE HUTTS

The heroes might want to talk to the Hutts at this point. The Hutts would be delighted to hear about the secret race broadcasts and the mining scam news. They do not admit to having any connection with Jer Blaskuna or give any indication that they set up the heroes in the first place. They do admit that they would be perfectly happy if the heroes cause trouble for their rival.

If the heroes try to bargain with the Hutts or make any demands on them, they are unceremoniously removed from the Hutts' audience chamber.

ANDO PRIME

After their investigation on Tatooine, the heroes eventually head to Ando Prime. A sparkling jewel in space, cold Ando Prime is distinguished by a series of flat ice lakes, interspersed with shelves of ice that have built up from moving glacier masses. Outposts, fringe towns, and frozen monasteries from ages past also break up the landscape every few thousand kilometers.

The heroes' ship touches down on Elesa, one of Ando Prime's more populated spaceports. Elesa makes Mos Espa look like Coruscant by comparison.

EXPLORING ELESA

A dingy town carved from stone and ice, Elesa is an outpost of ten buildings and a handful of ramshackle living spaces. There are two main roads forming an "X" through town. Both roads are sheets of smoothed ice covered with wooden planks. The citizens of Elesa wear heavy furs, and most of the men have beards.

Two of the ten buildings in Elesa are cantinas: the Icicle and the Cliffside. Both have a couple of extra rooms where the heroes can stay, if necessary. Other structures include an old shrine, a general supply store, a doctor's office, a constable/jail office, a government building, a repair shop, a miner's union house, and a boarding house.

Repair Shop: The repair shop is run by a bored Rodian, Feéna Ghel. She has one used speeder for sale, a Ubrikkian good-Zero modified for travel in icy conditions. It costs 3,500 credits. With a successful Diplomacy

check (DC 15), the heroes can rent it from her for a 1,000-credit damage deposit and 100 credits per day. Otherwise, they must buy it. For 100 credits more (whether purchased or rented), it can be quickly rigged with jump seats to increase its passenger capacity from four to six.

Miner's Union Hall: This building consists of a run-down boarding house, a large common room, and some offices. Ten grizzled miners work here, spending their days on the ice fields searching for ores and precious metals. The miners are discouraged and worn out, as the pickings are slim on Ando Prime.

The Cantinas: The heroes land and "settle in" just as miners are returning from a dig. They seat themselves in one of the cantinas to unwind after a hard day's work. The miners are short-tempered and unused to visitors. While casual banter and buying them drinks keeps them quiet, any hard questioning results in a fast fist to the nose and a full-out bar fight.

There are seven miners, all Humans. They fight with their fists and an occasional table, but they just want to blow off steam, not seriously hurt anyone. They instantly back off when anyone draws a weapon. The local constable, a Human named Byam Awson, overlooks any non-lethal infractions, provided damages to the cantina are covered. If someone is killed, Awson attempts to arrest the responsible party.

ASKING QUESTIONS

Elesa's citizens are standoffish, but not rude. Anyone can give general directions to Juaka Canyon and most are aware of the Podrace that was held there. A successful Gather Information check (DC 13) enables the heroes to find someone who saw Ree within the last month. No one remembers him connected to the Podrace, though. He claimed to be leading a survey crew looking for animal species that have adapted to the icy conditions. One of the last people Ree talked to before heading out was the mining manager, Geon Justic.

CONFRONTING GEON JUSTIC

Geon's office in the Miner's Union Hall is the lap of luxury. Amenities abound, including a state-of-the-art heater, a comfortable chair, roomy desk, and several electronic devices

for both work and play. Geon wears the finest, latest Coruscant fashion. Heroes who succeed at an appropriate Knowledge (cultures) check (DC 10) notice that the bulk of his furnishings are either of Coruscant design or carry CSA markings. Without an appropriate Knowledge skill, heroes must make a successful Intelligence check (DC 15) to notice this fact.

Geon Justic is aware of Ree's activities, as Ree recently bought his loyalty with CSA surplus items. Geon supplied Ree with mining survey equipment adapted to Ando Prime's unique conditions and has promised to turn a blind eye to unusual activities. In return, Ree pulled strings and got Geon a bunch of new toys. If the heroes ask about Ree, Geon claims that he just spoke to him yesterday. Ree had asked him about Juaka Canyon and if his crew had spotted any creatures on the ice. Ree seemed very interested in going down to Juaka for some reason. Geon gladly gives the heroes directions to Juaka Canyon should they wish to follow Ree.

Geon did not tell Ree about the Talids, and as long as the heroes don't seem sympathetic to Ree, Geon laughs at his own cleverness as he tells the heroes about leaving Ree in the dark about Talids. He wants Ree to run into them, in which case he believes that Ree could "disappear" out on the ice, since he's hoping to salvage scanning equipment from Podracers. If that happened, Geon could keep all his new stuff without any obligation to help Ree later. Geon is very pleased with himself for executing this ruse.

Despite his comfort and good cheer, Geon is nervous about the whole operation. All these CSA items in his office are stolen, and if pressed about the CSA, Geon down-plays it, saying that a merchant ship recently came through the system and he got a really good deal. He's obviously lying, as no other citizen of Elesa has heard of such a vessel, and there are no other signs of a trader vessel ever having been near Elesa. He does not draw a connection between Ree and the CSA, though. He thinks Ree is an employee of a small-time crime boss, Ungasan.

If the heroes lean on Geon at all, his nervousness grows, and he offers concessions to the heroes to keep them quiet. At first he offers to lend them cold-weather gear if

CHARACTER STATISTICS

JER BLANKUNA, MALE TWI'LEK NOBLE

3: Init +0; Defense 14 (+4 class); Spd 10; VP/WP 18/15; Atk +2 melee (1d3, punch), +2 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Call in a favor, Lekku, Inspire confidence +1, low-light vision; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; SZ M; FP 2; Rep 3; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 16.



Equipment: Blaster pistol, comlink, personal items.

Skills: Bluff (bonus) +1, Computer Use +6, Diplomacy +9, Entertain (speaking) +6, Knowledge (Tatooine) +8, Knowledge (intergalactic law) +8, Profession (lawyer) +6, Profession (gangster) +3, Sense Motive +6.

Feats: Great Fortitude, Low Profile, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

BENKUDI, MALE DUG THUG 2: Init +2 (Dex); Defense 12 (+2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP —/14; Atk +3 melee (1d3+3, kick), +4 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Great shout, +2 Climb, +2 Jump; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, comlink.

Skills: Climb +6, Intimidate +1, Knowledge (Dug history) +4, Knowledge (Tatooine) +4, Profession (gambler) +1.

Feats: Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

REE, MALE TWI'LEK SCOUT 3:

Init +1 (Dex); Defense 16 (+5 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 22/14; Atk +2 melee (1d3, punch), +4 ranged (3d8, blaster rifle); SQ Lekku, low-light vision, trailblazing; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; SZ M; FP 2; Rep 1; Str 11, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.



Equipment: Blaster rifle, comlink, electrobinoculars, survival kit, tools.

Skills: Computer Use +5, Craft (Podracers) +6, Demolitions +5, Knowledge (Podracers) +5, Knowledge (Ando Prime) +5, Knowledge (Tatooine) +5, Pilot +8, Repair +10, Survival +4.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Repair), Force Sensitive, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons), Track.

TALIBS, MALE TALID EXPERT 3 [4]: Init +2 (+2 Dex); Defense 11 (+1 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP —/11; Atk +2 (1d4, knife), +2 ranged (2d8, slugthrower); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 0; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Equipment: Slugthrower, all-temperature cloak, comlink, personal items.

Skills: Appraise +6, Craft (varies) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Repair +6, Survival +8, Treat Injury +8

Feats: Weapon Proficiency (slugthrowers), Track.

GEON JUSTIC, MALE HUMAN EXPERT 4: Init +0; Defense 11 (+1 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP —/14; Atk +3 melee (1d3, punch), +3 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ None; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; SZ M; FP 1; Rep 1; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 9.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, comlink, survival kit, personal belongings.

Skills: Bluff +5, Computer Use +5, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (administration) +7, Knowledge (mining) +7, Survival +9.

Feats: Endurance, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

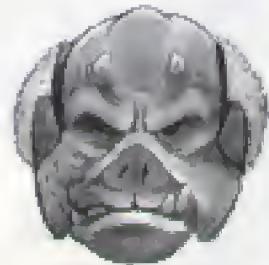
KAELEEN UNGASAN, MALE HUMAN

NOBLE 2/SOLDIER 2/SCOUNDREL 2: Init +2 (+2 Dex); Defense 19 (+7 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 33/15; Atk +4 melee (1d6, martial arts), +6 ranged (3d8, heavy blaster); SQ Better lucky than good, call in favor, illicit barter, inspire confidence +1; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; SZ M; FP 4; Rep 5; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Equipment: Heavy blaster, comlink, electrobinoculars, personal items.

Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +8, Computer Use +6, Diplomacy +8, Forgery +6, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (Corporate Sector) +9, Knowledge (Podracing) +5, Knowledge (crime families) +9, Knowledge (Galactic law) +7, Knowledge (mining) +7, Intimidate +10, Listen +5, Sense Motive +5.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Dodge, Martial Arts, Mobility, Persuasive, Toughness, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, vibro weapons, simple weapons).



Mercenaries & Henchmen

The heroes encounter several groups of villains during this scenario. Most are low-level thugs hired for their quick triggers and slow wits. Chapter 14 of the Core Rulebook contains pre-generated characters for these encounters.

Corporate Sector Authority Thugs: Treat any CSA agent as a generic Thug. In the encounter on Tatooine, there should be two Thug 2's and one Thug 4.

Constable: Treat Byam Awson as a generic Mercenary (Soldier 4).

Miners: Treat each of the seven miners as a Human Thug 2 with 4 ranks of Knowledge (mining) instead of Intimidate.

Ree's Men: Ree has one technician, a human Generic Tech (Expert 4), and two Thug 2's. Instead of Intimidate, the thugs have ranks in Knowledge (Ando Prime), Knowledge (mining), and Computer Use.

UNGASAN'S BODYGUARD: Ungasan's Human bodyguard, Rikal Star-gunner, is a Generic Elite Trooper (Soldier 4).

Desilijic Clan Mercenaries: The Desilijic clan mercenaries consist of three Gamorrean Thug 2's. Davon Gitta, the Human leader of this squad, is a Generic Bounty Hunter (Scout 4).

Snow Job

they want to find Ree. If they continue to press the issue, he will offer them free rental of the speeder at the Feena's repair shop, just to get them out of his office.

FINDING OUT ABOUT TALIDS

Nearly any citizen of Elesa can tell the heroes about Talids. Talids are nomadic humanoids with thick hides. They trade scavenged parts and goods and wear clothes and furs that allow them to blend in with the ice and snow. Talids are not greedy, but they are shrewd and persistent. Anyone out on the ice who has anything they want might have trouble getting away from them.

Most citizens of Elena consider Talids mere thieves, but a few levelheaded people in town know that Talids have different concepts of trading. Talids trade by openly taking. Once trade negotiations have formally been opened between Talids by a short ceremony, they freely take belongings from each other until an acceptable equilibrium has been reached. When it has, they formally close the negotiations. The negotia-

tion period can last for months, or even years. The subtleties of this system are usually lost on the Elesan miners. While Talids also understand the concept of trading goods for money, it isn't always clear to non-Talids when they're trading by taking and when they're trading for cash.

Talids become quickly unreasonable in a salvage situation. Since scavenging is a large part of their economy and no one owns salvage until it has been properly claimed, Talids can be outright vicious about protecting their claims. Talids aren't well equipped, but they know their turf and take full advantage of that knowledge.

LATE ARRIVALS

A few hours after the heroes hit Ando Prime, several other interested parties do too.

Desilijic Clan Mercenaries: Assuming the heroes still have the datapad that Jer Blankuna gave them, four mercenaries hired by the Desilijic clan arrive from Tatooine following the tracer signal. Their first stop is Justic's mining office, where the weak-willed manager directs them to Juaka Canyon. The Desilijic mercenaries follow the heroes at a discrete distance, avoiding trouble in town and waiting for

the heroes to lead them to Ree. Their arrival in the canyon is covered below, in the Juaka Canyon encounter section.

If the heroes do not have the datapad or removed the tracer, these mercenaries do not appear.

Kaeline Ungasan and Bodyguard: In a bizarre coincidence, Ungasan arrives in Elesa just after the mercenaries to check up on his mining operation. His first stop is Justic's mining office, where the slightly confused Justic points out where the heroes went (and Ree as well). Justic does not mention the Desilijic thugs.

If the heroes have left, Ungasan pursues with

one bodyguard. Otherwise, he hangs around town and watches the heroes until they leave. He has no desire to stir things up in town and figures that Ree can help with any "problem" once they're together.

CSA Thugs: Unknown to Ungasan, the CSA has been keeping tabs on his activities. Soon after he arrives, a group of four CSA thugs show up in Elesa. Their first stop is Justic's mining operation, where the increasingly confused Justic spills his guts for the fourth time with much less merriment. They follow Ungasan.

After that, Justic gets extremely nervous. He packs up and leaves town for a while until things blow over.

Juaka Canyon

Located 500 kilometers from Elesa, Juaka Canyon is a large open crevice, at least 30 meters deep and over 150 meters long. The sheer pillars of ice-covered rock rise from the canyon floor, each no wider than 5 meters. Most are over 15 meters high. The canyon's icy floor has hundreds of wind-carved irregularities, and light flurries of snow blow through it constantly. The wind keeps most of the snow blown clear of the canyon, leaving ice-glazed rock. It will probably take the heroes about three hours to reach the canyon from Elesa, with the other three interested parties in pursuit.

Speeder travel in the canyon at any speed above Caution requires a successful Pilot check (DC 10). Pilot checks suffer a -2 circumstance penalty due to weather conditions. Results of failed Pilot checks are listed in Table 10-4 of the Core Rulebook. The snow flurries provide one-quarter cover to anyone in the canyon. See Table 8-8 of the Core Rulebook.

CANYON'S EDGE

The heroes might want to check out the canyon from above before they enter. Traveling the jagged, windy edge of the canyon requires a successful Pilot check (DC 15). Failure means they must veer off or be blown into the canyon. Heroes can also stop, get out, and just look into the canyon.

Make a Spot check (DC 15) for any hero who looks into the canyon. If successful, the heroes see Ree on the canyon floor below. He seems to be taking cover and shooting at something above him. A successful Spot



check opposed by the Talids' Hide skill reveals their locations on top of the pillars, firing down on Ree and his men. From this distance, the heroes can also make out four wrecked Podracers in the canyon, but no other details. Remember to account for distance and snow when making Spot checks.

Entering the Canyon

Once they've entered the canyon, the heroes expose themselves to a very chaotic combat situation. This battle takes place in the vicinity of four wrecked Podracers left behind from a previous race.

PODRACER WRECKS

Podracer #1: About 30 meters down the canyon, large chunks of this Podracer rest intact. One engine is barely damaged, the other twisted and destroyed. The cockpit—a crushed ball of metal—holds the crumpled corpse of a Sullustan. A successful Search roll (DC 18) reveals several slugthrower holes in the cockpit and one in the body.

Podracers #2 and #3: The debris from these wrecks is strewn from the first Podracer to 40 meters from the end of the canyon. The bulk of the debris is 90 meters in, wrapped around two stone pillars. Two wrecked engines are hooked together by piping on the side, one from each Podracer. Chunks of the cockpits are spread across the debris field. The pilots, a Sullustan and a Dug, were thrown clear and killed.

Podracer #4: Near the canyon mouth are scattered pieces of metal, gears and wiring. There is less debris, and a successful Repair check or applicable Knowledge check (DC 15) reveals that any useful parts have already been removed. The Podracer pilot, a Phuki, lies dead in the cockpit.

REE

Ree and his three men hide around the wreckage of Podracers #2 and #3. Two Adno Nightfalkons, modified to carry passengers, sit by the wreckage of the pods. They are shot full of holes and are barely functional (a -4 equipment penalty applies to any attempted action with these vehicles). To talk to Ree, the heroes must reach him through the rain of slugthrower fire from above.

Ree has no idea who Jer Blakuna is or why he would want him. He has no wish to unravel that whole web of lies. If the

heroes mention that they were on Tatooine talking to Benkudi, Ree starts to think the heroes were sent by Jabba to kill him, creating a very tense situation. A successful Diplomacy check (DC 15) or some creative roleplaying helps defuse the situation.

Ree explains that the Talid snipers think the Podracers are their salvage claim. If asked why he finds it so important to contest the claim, Ree says that he is following up on a family's request to recover some personal items from a downed pilot. If a hero mentions a mining scam, Ree denies all knowledge and tries to divert their attention to the more immediate concern of snipers taking potshots at them.

Ree confirms his employment with Ungasan but denies any connection to the Desilijic clan or the CSA. He does reveal that Ungasan would like to take over some of the Hutt's business. He does not disclose that Ungasan has ties to the CSA and has plans to conduct some illicit mining on Ando Prime.

TALID SNIPERS

Hiding on the tops of the stone pillars near each wreck, the Talids are armed with slugthrowing rifles. Each has a pack animal called a tanta. (Tantas are larger cousins of the tauntaun). Tantas walk on four legs, though they can rise up on two legs briefly. The tantas are camouflaged with netting along the canyon walls. Heroes who make a successful Spot check against the tantas' Hide roll can see them. The camouflage provides a +4 equipment bonus to the tanta's Hide skill.

The pillars provide the snipers with three-quarters cover. They fire on any hero who gets close to a Podracer wreck. They come down at night to search victims' corpses, if any.

The single sniper waiting above Podracer #1 has a clear view of Podracers #1, #2, and #3. The two above Podracers

#2 and #3 have a clear view of all four wrecks. The two Talids above Podracer #4 have a clear view of Podracers #2 and #3.

The Talids have no agenda regarding the invaders to their land. They shoot at any easy target. If the Desilijic clan's mercenaries become embroiled in a firefight with the heroes and/or Ree, the Talids do not play favorites. They shoot any easy target, pick off the wounded, and scavenge any bodies left behind.

The heroes can try to negotiate with the Talids. The Talids begin the encounter as Hostile, but a successful Diplomacy or Charisma check could adjust their attitude as noted in "Intriguing Interactions" (Chapter 12 of the Core Rulebook).

UNGASAN'S ARRIVAL

A few rounds after the heroes encounter Ree and the Talids, Ungasan arrives with his bodyguard. As soon as they see each other, Ungasan, Ree, and their followers attempt



SNOW JOB

to shoot their way out of the canyon. The criminals are determined to get away and protect their potential mining operation, but if the fight turns against them, they surrender to the heroes and face the consequences rather than fight to the death.

If he lives through the battle, Ree tries to escape. If the heroes turn him in to any authority outside the Core Worlds, the Desilijic clan has him killed. Ree tells the heroes that turning him in is as good as killing him. He promises that if they let him go, he'll change his identity and go back to honest Podracing. Whether he's lying is up to you, the GameMaster.

DESILIJIC CLAN MERCENARIES

These mercenaries arrive on site via speeder after the heroes, Ungasan, and Ree begin fighting. Seeing the battle, the mercenaries take positions at the canyon's exit and set up a simple ambush. Anyone leaving the

canyon must make a Listen check (DC 20) or a Spot check opposed by the mercenaries' Hide checks. Heroes who fail to notice or hear the mercs are caught flat-footed.

The mercenaries have orders to capture Ree alive, if possible. Anyone else is to be killed.

Wrapping Things Up

The Talids have carried a scavenged Podracer scanner to a temporary camp about 35 kilometers away. They are more than happy to show the heroes any scrapped Podracer parts. They are also happy to sell them the scanner for 300 credits. The scanner is easily identified by any hero making an easy Spot check (DC 5). A successful Repair check (DC 13) identifies it

and allows one to download data files marked with Ungasan's Corporate Sector Identification. While the Corporate Sector itself is untouchable, the evidence would be enough to convict Ungasan and Ree if they are caught.

After the heroes defeat the mercenary ambush, they must decide what to do with any captives before returning to Jer Blankuna's mansion to collect their pay. Unfortunately for the heroes, Jer Blankuna and his wife disappear, relocated by the Desilijic clan. The mansion has been cleaned out and sold to Sumda and Jylle Tend, a very nice family of Humans from Alderaan. ☺

VEHICLE DATA

Ree's Speeder Bikes (2)

Craft: Modified Ikar-Adno 22-B Nightfalcon; Class: Ground (speeder); Cost: 6,000 (new), 2,000 (used); Size: Large (4.87 meters long); Crew: Normal +2 (1 pilot); Passengers: 1; Cargo Capacity: 4 kg; Speed: 100 m (max. speed 300 km/h); Altitude: up to 10 m; Defense: 11 (-1 size, +2 armor); Hull Points: 4 (damaged, 16 when repaired); DR: 5.

Weapon: Laser cannon; Fire Arc: Front; Attack Bonus: +5 (-1 size, +2 crew, +4 fire control); damage 4d8; Range: 20m

ANDO PRIME SPEEDER

Craft: Modified Ubrikkian 9000 Zook; Class: Ground (speeder); Cost: 10,000 (new), 3,500 (used); Size: Huge (7.5 meters long); Crew: Normal +2 (1 pilot); Passengers: 6; Cargo Capacity: 50 kg; Speed: 80 m (max. speed 200 km/h); Altitude: up to 10 m; Defense: 13 (-2 size, +5 armor); Hull Points: 20; DR: 5.

Weapon: Laser cannon; Fire Arc: Front; Attack Bonus: +4 (-2 size, +2 crew, +4 fire control); damage 4d8; Range: 20m

TALID STATISTICS

These statistics allow Talids as a playable species in the Star Wars Roleplaying Game:

Talids travel the icy wastes of Ando Prime and are considered its native species. They remain scattered across the planet, having no desire to integrate themselves into the more civilized areas. Talid culture is primitive, but old and layered with a rich history.

Personality: Talids are open and playful among their own kind but xenophobic when interacting with most other species. Their barter is curt and efficient, with little banter. Talids know a fair price and do not put up with a lot of pretentious negotiation.

Physical Description: Talids have wiry hair, usually white or blond. They grow it long, and males wear facial hair. Dark hair on Talids is dyed a light color. Talids string their hair with stone and bone beads as a measure of status and importance. When stealth is needed, they rub animal fat in their hair to dull the contact between the beads.

They have narrow eyes and flat noses. Usually stocky, their bodies are covered with at least some body hair.

Homeworld: Ando Prime.

Language: Basic and a series of hand signals and noises among themselves. Most Talids have little desire to learn other languages.

Sample Names: Debo, Pudo, Trochep.

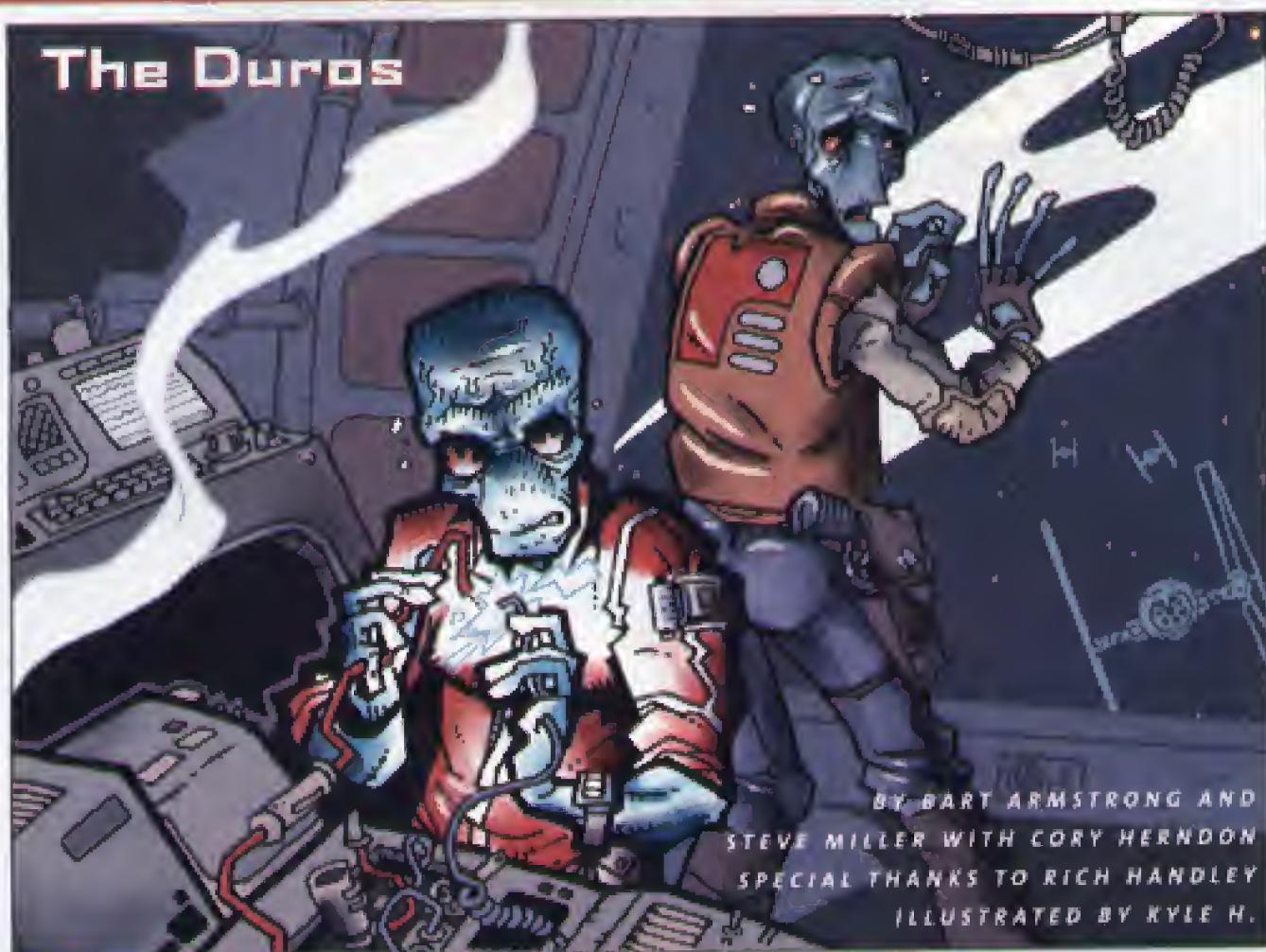
Adventurers: Only a rare Talid would choose an adventuring life away from his tribe. Talids are very patient and opportunistic and make excellent Scouts or Fringers.



TALID SPECIES TRAITS

- » +2 Constitution, -2 Dexterity. Talids withstand harsh conditions, but they are not very agile.
- » Medium-size. As Medium-size creatures, Talids have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- » Talid base speed is 10 meters.
- » +2 species bonus to Handle Animal, Hide, Ride, and Survival checks. Talids learn to ride tantas from an early age, along with survival skills needed for their chosen lifestyle.
- » Automatic Languages: Basic, Talid signaling.

The Duros



BY BART ARMSTRONG AND
STEVE MILLER WITH CORY HERNDON
SPECIAL THANKS TO RICH HANDLEY
ILLUSTRATED BY KYLIE H.

Within The University of Sambra Guide to Intelligent Life, renegade scientist Tem Eliss characterizes the Duros as "the great travelers and wanderers of the galaxy." In his study, he casts the Empire in a particularly dark light, claiming that the Empire's "mistrust of Duro was an atrocity, one of the first steps on the long, dark road that ended with the destruction of Alderaan." Such sentiments forced Tem Eliss into exile, but thanks to his work, the ruin of Duro and the Duros' puzzling role in the war against the Yuuzhan Vong can be studied and scrutinized by all.

Duros

The Duros are tall, hairless humanoids from the Duro system, which is located at the extreme outer edge of the Core sector. Large eyes and wide lipless mouths dominate

their noseless faces. Their skin color ranges from bluish-gray to bluish-green to a deep azure. Adult Duros stand between 1.8 meters and 2.2 meters tall.

The Duros were the first species to become a major factor in the Galactic Republic, and in the past, many respected scholars credited the Duros with creating the first hyperspace. Although this theory fell into disfavor as the Empire's anthropocentric philosophies took hold in academic circles, it is impossible to deny that the Duros have been traveling among the stars for at least as long as Humans.

The Duros seem to have a natural affinity for space travel. Many of them possess an innate grasp of the mathematical underpinnings of astrogational computations, and there are many tales that get swapped in cantinas about Duros astrogators preparing

supposedly impossible jumps in their heads. Although not as numerous as the Human population, the Duros are almost as omnipresent; all but the smallest settlements in Known Space feature Duros populations.

Another trait they share with Humans is that a number of "Near Duros" species exist in the galaxy. Like Humans, groups of Duros have existed on other worlds in isolation from the rest of their kind, and they have either adapted to different environments or have evolved in slightly different directions than the baseline species. The most populous and well-known Near Duros species are the Neimoidians, a species rarely encountered during the Rebellion Era.

Duros can be found in any profession, but most professionals are experts working in jobs related to space travel in some way.



Duros adventurers can belong to any class and prestige class. Duros speak Basic with ease, as their language (Durese) contributed to its development.

History and Culture

The moonless world of Duro is murky, brown, and toxic to most living creatures, but it wasn't always this way. At the dawn of the Old Republic, centuries before the emergence of the Galactic Empire, Duro was a temperate and fertile world with abundant natural resources. The ancient monarchy took great pains to meld its creations with the natural wonders of the world, building exquisite architectural splendors that merged seamlessly with their surroundings. The benevolent Queen Rana Mas Trehalt encouraged her people to explore various arts and sciences, particularly interstellar flight.

Scientific leaps enabled the Duros to venture out among the stars. They built orbital waystations, allowing them to probe the farthest reaches of space. This era saw the emergence of new Duros colonies on various worlds including Fadden, Aquilae, and Atapap One. The Duros helped avert the Ninth Conflict on Gerhalt III and made first contact with the Strathen and the Twiroth. Many Duros settled, for a time, on the Twiroth worlds of Kalok and Saloch, which accounts for the strong Duros influence pervading the architecture of those worlds.

As the Duros charted new hyperspace routes across the galaxy, they became more isolated, less attached to their homeworld, and less inclined to follow the traditional and conservative government. Shipping conglomerations saw this society-wide apathy as the perfect opportunity to usurp control from the planet's reigning sovereign, Duchess Geneer. They placed the fate

of the world in the hands of greedy, mega-corporate coalitions that plundered the world's resources to help finance their off-world excursions and provide for the Duros living on the planet's first orbital cities. Meanwhile, a fever of wanderlust gripped the "modern" Duros, and most of them abandoned life on Duro to live in majestic orbital cities or ply new hyperspace routes, adopting the stars as their new home.

The corporate coup had dire consequences, as millions of wealth-seeking Duros abandoned the planet to trade and deal on other worlds. Then came the Empire. The Imperial navy seized control of the Duro system, driving uncooperative corporations out of business, commandeering lucrative business holdings, erecting hideous factories and mines that contaminated the oceans, and decimating the remainder of Duro's natural resources. Although the residents of the orbital cities continued to live comfortably, the planet soon found itself mired in toxic waste and solid duracrete, its ecosystem nearly obliterated.

The Imperial navy also claimed the Duros shipyards and orbital facilities. Duros engineers were commissioned to build huge, hyperdrive-capable cargo carriers to haul goods and supplies between Imperial worlds. The largest cargo vessels built by the Duros had modular, spherical storage compartments. Duros personnel transports—sleek and agile craft loosely resembling vertically standing saucers—were favored by some Imperial dignitaries.

The Rebel Alliance made a determined effort to drive away the Imperials but were repulsed. A few months after the Battle of Endor, the Empire abandoned Duro. Megacorporations—most of them based in the Corellian Sector—reclaimed the system and its shipyards.

Almost thirty years later, during the time of the New Republic, the Duros found their planet and orbital habitats overrun with alien refugees driven from worlds devastated by the Yuuzhan Vong. The New Republic Senate Select Committee for Refugees, searching the Core worlds for a place to relocate millions of homeless refugees, struck a deal with the Duros High House to use Duro as a haven. Squalid camps were erected behind security fences. The Senate entrusted the safety of Duro's new indigenous population—and the security of its shipyards—to Admiral Darez Wuht, a Duros with little compassion for outsiders.

Senate Ambassador Leia Organa Solo spearheaded efforts to improve Duro's planetary conditions. A number of self-contained ecosystems were built, breathing masks and experimental antitoxins were administered to endangered refugees, but the bureaucracy in Coruscant thwarted Leia's efforts to deal with the planetwide ecological catastrophe. The Jedi, in their attempts to protect the refugees and provide the bare necessities, found themselves equally daunted in their dealings with the corrupt CorDuro Shipping Corporation, which controlled most of the shipping in the system and was diverting emergency supplies from the refugee settlements to the Duros orbital habitats. Suspicions that the Duros might be in collusion with the dreaded Yuuzhan Vong darkened the whole species' reputation.

When the Yuuzhan Vong invaded the system, the magnitude of the Duros' complicity was revealed as the Duro Defense Force and the Duro orbital habitats took no steps to protect the defenseless refugees on the planet below. In exchange, the Duros orbital cities would be spared the Yuuzhan Vong onslaught. However, this proved to be a Vong deception. A devious weapon called a Devin basal burrowed into the planet's crust, dragging the orbital cities down from space. The orbital habitat of Orr-Om was the first to fall. All other cities but one soon followed. Duros collaborators fooled into aiding the Yuuzhan Vong managed to relocate to the orbital habitat of Urrdor just prior to the invasion and were able to use

Duros Common: Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 10m; VP/VP +18; Atk +0 in melee (1d3-1, punch); +0 ranged; SQ Spacer feat as species bonus; Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -1; SZ M (1.8m to 2.2m); SP 0; DSP 0; Rep 0; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Equipment: Variety of personal belongings

Skills: Astrogation +4 or Pilot +4, Knowledge (varies) +2, Profession (varies) +2.

Feats: Spacer

Special Qualities: All Duros receive the Spacer feat as a species bonus.

Species Features: -2 Str, +2 Dex, -2 Con, +2 Int.

The Duros

The Yuuzhan Vong were determined to restore the ravaged planet—to bring new life to that which vile technology had very nearly destroyed. The planet's proximity to Coruscant and other Core systems also provided the perfect platform for future military strikes if the New Republic did not agree to the Yuuzhan Vong's terms.

Notable Duros

- Childee Na Maak, owner of Starforge Station Shipyard, who offered Chewbacca a large sum of money to come work for him.
- Chia C'Haan, founder of the Duros colony at Neimoidia, whose collected writings detailed his people's fall from grace.
- Croig Jacamiden, the owner of Croig's Fix-It Barn, rumored to have connections to most smugglers in the Chorios Systems.
- Grumme Vion, a top-notch smuggler and owner of the starship Corsa-Vinn, who helped the Alliance resist the Empire.

the city's ancient drive units to flee the system.

• Jennsar So-Billes, an early negotiator in the formation of the Rebel Alliance, along with Sian Tevv of Sullust and others.

• Lai Nootka, a Coruscant weapons dealer and captain of the Star's Delight, who took his aliases from characters and ships in Duros adventure novels.

• Ohwun and Cachi De Maal, owners of Docking Bay 94, who have worked under many names including "Bringe and Probos" and "Ellors Madak and Baniss Keeg."

• Truthful Toryn, a dealer whom Han Solo tried to con into buying a stolen ship called the *Talisman*.

• Admiral Darez Wuht, the commanding officer of the Mon Cal cruiser *Poesy*, assigned by the New Republic to reinforce Duro's defense against the Yuuzhan Vong.

• Durgard Brarun, the Vice-Director of CorDuro Shipping, who was willing to sacrifice the New Republic refugees on his homeworld to protect his Duro-based corporation and its allies from a Yuuzhan Vong invasion force.

Adventure Hooks

There are countless possibilities for adventure on and near the Duros homeworld. Possible adventures include the following:

Lost Art

Suitable Eras: Rise of the Empire, Rebellion, New Jedi Order

A renowned Duros archaeologist named Dustini Spa Ronii fears that someone is plundering artifacts from the tombs of dead Duros monarchs beneath the ruins of the old capital. Dustini secretly suspects that the Duro High House (during the Rise of the Empire era) or Palpatine's advisor, High Prophet Kadaan (during the Rebellion era), might be responsible but does not want to voice his suspicions without proof. He also knows that a notorious smuggler who frequently assumes the guise of a preeminent Human archaeologist has made excursions to the Royal City in recent months. The Duros archaeologist hires the heroes to shadow the smuggler and recover any stolen artifacts before they can be placed aboard his transport

in secret compartments and spirited off-world. Dustini also wants the heroes to learn the identity of the smuggler's employer. This could be a high-ranking Duros official, a "concerned" Duros historian, a representative of the Duro High House or CorDuro Shipping executive, Imperial official, or High Prophet Kadaan himself.

Sudden Death

Suitable Eras: Rise of the Empire, Rebellion, New Jedi Order

A corrupt megacorporation has hired a team of terrorists to infiltrate and take command of the Glydus Drilling Platform. They intend to use the platform's industrial drilling laser to target and destroy a mining installation on the surface of Duro. The destruction of the mining installation will ruin one of the corporation's competitors, killing hundreds of innocent mine workers in the process. The heroes are sent in to deal with the situation and must defeat the insidious terrorists in the Glydus Platform's control center before the platform moves into position over the mining

Locations of Interest

Valley of Royalty

This once-lush valley was transformed into a wasteland by overmining and toxic pollutants. Monuments depicting rulers and spiritual leaders from ancient Duros dynasties are overshadowed by roiling clouds of noxious mist and smoke. The valley walls are pierced with labyrinthine mining networks and monstrous processing stations. Mutated fefze beetles—the only fauna to survive Duro's ecological holocaust—roam this desolate place, converting any organic material they find into an edible protein paste.

Ranadaast, The City of Ashes

Duro's former capital city is named after Queen Ranaa Mas Trehalt, one of the planet's early monarchs. It is referred to as the Royal City or the City of Ashes by offworld Duros. It manages to retain some vestige of its once proud beauty, despite the suffocating pollutants that have dirtied its marble spires, corroded its gray translucent domes, and filled its boulevards with puddles of

installation and fires its laser. Unknown to the heroes, the terrorists have rigged the platform to fall from the sky after it fires, destroying the platform and evidence of the corporation's involvement.

A Private War

Suitable Eras: Rise of the Empire, Rebellion

Elav Feen, the Twi'lek owner of The Swirling Vortex, makes the heroes a tempting offer. He tells them that many of his Corellian associates have been plagued by pirates in the outer fringes of the Duro system. He then points the heroes to a Duros engineer seated in one corner of the bar, whom he suspects has been helping the pirates secure equipment to repair their damaged vessels. Elav asks the heroes to make contact with the Duros, pretending to be anti-Corellian types willing to sell their services and their ship to the pirates' cause. Regardless of how they decide to approach the Duros, Elav wants the pirate attacks to stop. In exchange, he'll put the heroes in contact with several influential Corellian merchants with whom they can call in a "favor" or two.

concentrated poison. Below the city lay the tombs of the planet's long-lost rulers. Although some Duros historians do their best to maintain the city's more impressive and historically significant districts, the rest of the city has fallen into disrepair, harboring fugitives and enormous fefze beetles where it once housed artists and scientists.

BBURU CITY

The largest of twenty enormous orbital habitats, Bburru is a sprawling architectural and engineering wonder, a majestic lattice of spheres and domes joined together by a near-symmetrical web of spokes and ship-yard arms, all gleaming in the orange light of Duro's sun. Most of the city's residents and businesses—including the luxurious corporate offices of CorDuro Shipping—occupy towers and domes with views of the stars instead of the murky world below. The levels closer to the planet contain the city reactors and drive units, generators for the planetary shield, and cargo loading docks.

The residents of Bburru and similar orbital habitats want for nothing. The political leaders of Duro, the High House, reside in Bburru and have few ties to tradition. With the support of the CorDuro Shipping Corporation's executive committee, they are helping to preserve what's left of Duro's past by transporting priceless Duros artifacts from the surface. High House has authorized the disassembly of several historical buildings and monuments, while CorDuro has secretly contracted various smugglers and black market consortiums to find happy homes for more priceless trinkets purloined from the tombs of ancient monarchs. A handful of concerned historians and archaeologists know of CorDuro's plans to transport key monuments offworld but are not yet aware of the illicit tomb-robbing. Few other Duros seem to care.

All visitors and vessels arriving at Bburru must be cleared by an agent of the Bburru Docking Authority. Other orbital habitats have similar personnel to inspect credentials and cargoes.

Other orbital cities include Rrudebar, Orr-Orn, Kri-Larun, and Urrdorff.

TAVANA

This ancient Duros mining city, situated in the bowl of a meteor crater, reached its height during the early years of the planet's Industrial Age centuries before the Imperial occupation. It is a haven for galactic refugees fleeing the Yuuzhan Vong during the age of the New Republic—the old rock mines converted into shelters, the ore processing plants remodeled into crude water purification plants.

GLYDUS DRILLING PLATFORMS

These small, anti-gravity mining installations float beneath the toxic clouds of Duro and were designed to support crews of only a dozen or so technical operators and a handful of droids. Each platform's lower hemisphere incorporates a massive drilling laser that can bore shafts through the planetary crust to reach deep mineral deposits. The power needed to fire the drilling laser limited its use to one shot every 20 or so hours. During the dark days of the Empire, Imperials tried to use the drilling lasers to help keep the Duros government in line, believing that Duros officials would not stomach the loss of historical monuments on the planet's surface. When the Duros officials showed little concern for these monuments to their past, the Imperials abandoned the idea of using the platforms as weapons and sold them to the mining guilds and corporations.

The extraction platforms, constructed by the now-defunct Glydus Mining Corporation and co-funded by DuroDelve Industries before the Imperial occupation, were used as waystations after the fall of the Empire. Corporate cutbacks, terminated mining contracts, and general neglect caused these platforms to fall into disrepair soon thereafter. Twenty-five years after the Battle of Endor, only one Glydus Platform remains. The others have been dismantled—their drilling lasers salvaged and moved elsewhere—or have fallen from the sky.

TIERCAN DAM

A duraccrete marvel named after the Imperial engineer who designed it, this monstrosity is visible for miles even through the perpetual haze. The dam is 780 meters tall and over 2 kilometers wide. Water pours though valves near the base, giving the

Adventure Hooks (continued)

If the heroes play their cards right, they can trick the Duros engineer into setting up a meeting with the pirate leader, Jical Taphan, or one of her closest cohorts. Taphan, a Duros privateer betrayed by one too many megacorporations, is trying to avenge injustices wrought by a cartel of Corellian industrialists, attacking ships carrying spice and other illicit cargo in a valiant attempt to divide them and cripple their businesses. The heroes must choose whether to complete their mission (and risk angering Elav Feen's Corellian associates) or thwart Taphan's attacks and deliver her into the hands of the authorities.

EXTREME PREJUDICE

Suitable Era: New Jedi Order

Attacks by the Yuuzhan Vong have driven thousands of refugees to the Duro system. The Senate, in its attempts to provide a safe haven for these refugees, have set up self-contained living environments on Duro's toxic surface. Many Duros, however, loathe the presence of these outsiders and the risk they pose to Duro's peaceful system. Officials sent by the Senate to mediate disputes with the Duros suspect that a known Duros loyalist, Rialel Drage, is mounting a resistance effort to oppose the influx of refugees. The heroes must locate and track Drage long enough to discover what he's up to.

Drage plans to sabotage shipments of emergency supplies, injecting containers of food with toxins obtained from the planet. Drage has sympathizers working for the Bburru Docking Authority. When the next group of CorDuro shuttles land at the orbital city of Bburru for cargo inspection, Drage and a group of Duros thugs appear in Docking Authority uniforms to "inspect" the vessels, injecting toxins into the food supply before allowing the shuttles to leave for the refugee camps on the planet's surface.

The twist: If the heroes obtain the shuttles' flight plans, they discover that the supplies were never destined for the refugee settlements. By order of the CorDuro Executive Committee, the supplies

The Duros

Hooks (continued)

are being secretly diverted to another Duros orbital habitat (Undort). Yuuzhan Vong collaborators on the Executive Committee know about the imminent invasion and are stockpiling emergency supplies for themselves, leaving the refugees in the lurch.

If the heroes thwart Drage, Vice-Director Brarun of CorDuro Shipping learns of their success and extends his gratitude. Shortly after leaving Brarun's office, the heroes are attacked by a group of Gamorrean and Rodian thugs. The thugs might be mole of Drage's friends or CorDuro assassins sent by Brarun to "clean up the mess" and keep the company's schemes and complicity secret.

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duracite dam an incessant, guttural roar.

Before vacating Duro, the Imperials stripped the dam to its exoskeleton. The dam periodically serves as a lair for criminals and smugglers who like to conduct covert transactions or lose themselves in the maze of tunnels and aqueducts.

Vydat Stardock

This orbital station—one of many corporate-owned facilities in the Duro system—is referred to by spacers and starship engineers as the Vydat Pie because of its distinctive pie shape. The facility is disk-shaped with myriad landing bays arrayed along its circumference. Spindle-shaped business towers poke up from its slightly concave core, while slicing into the bottom of the "pie" are three semicircular, fin-shaped structures containing communications arrays and shield generators.

The most popular spacer bar on Vydat's Pie is The Swirling Vortex, run by a friendly Twilek scoundrel named Elav Feen (Scoundrel 6). Elav Feen treats his regular patrons well and has powerful connections throughout the Corporate Sector. The bar is tended by a friendly Wookiee commoner named Orrsa.

The Vydat Stardock is run by an obsequious Duros administrator named Dulse Tethin (Diplomat 4). Dulse is a greedy corporate sycophant, too eager to offer discount docking fees to companies in which he holds shares. He is much less accommodating with unaligned freighter captains unless they are willing to part with a small percentage of their hauls.

Docking fees for freighters, corvettes, and transports vary depending on the size of the vessel and the cargo (if any) it carries. Authorized military craft dock for free. The daily residential fees vary depending on the quality of the accommodations; again, authorized military personnel do not pay.

Starship Size	Construction Time
Gargantuan	9–12 months
Huge	6–7 months
Large	3–4 months
Medium-size	1–2 months
Small	2–3 weeks

Pri-Andylan Shipyard

During the Imperial occupation of the Duro system, this array of orbital starship construction depots on the fringe of the Duro system was a model of military efficiency. The shipyards were maintained by Pri-Andylan Propulsion Systems, an upstart Corellian corporation. Pri-Andylan retained the services of Niya Giedan (Diplomat 10), a Duros facilitator during the Imperial occupation, and relied on his efficient, militaristic methods to keep construction projects on schedule.

Nine years after the Battle of Endor, the Pri-Andylan shipyards were acquired by a coalition of Corporate Sector trading companies with offices on Rburru. The coalition obtained contracts to refit many of the New Republic's older capital ships, but strikes and delays at the shipyards forced the Senate to revoke many of these contracts. At the urging of certain Senators, the strained coalition appointed one of its member companies, CorDuro Shipping, to administrate the shipyards and put them back on schedule. Instead, CorDuro had most of the shipyard's engineers transferred to smaller, newer facilities in the various habitats orbiting Duro. The Pri-Andylan Shipyard was turned into a series of loading docks and storage bays for arriving and departing CorDuro freighters. This action fractured the coalition, leaving CorDuro with few allies but a perfectly serviceable shipyard.

During the Imperial occupation and the twenty years following the Battle of Endor, the shipyard employed over five thousand engineers, most of them Duros. During this period, the average time it takes the Pri-Andylan Shipyards to fulfill a shipbuilding contract is listed below. (The shipyards are not equipped to build Colossal, Tiny, Diminutive, or Fine starships.) Custom vessels have double the construction time. ■



CHANCE CUBE

Random Cargo Generator

BY MICHAEL MIKAElian AND BART ARMSTRONG

Your heroes are in a hangar full of freighters, and there's cargo scattered everywhere.

"What's in the box?" a player asks.

"Umm... some stuff," you say. "Nothing very interesting."

This is a conversation you never want to have with your players. Game books always encourage Gamemasters to liven up play with details, but that's not as easy as they make it sound. Enter the chance cube determiner for random cargo.

Here's how it works: Whenever someone wants to know about some cargo you haven't prepared for, roll a d% on Table 1 to determine how the cargo is being stored. Then, if the players get nosy and want to look inside, roll a d% on Table 2 to determine what is being stored. Finally, if they start tampering with the cargo or just

decide to take it, roll a d% on Table 3 to determine what secret or backstory the cargo might have.

When players get unusually curious, it means you're onto something. Run with it. You can make an impromptu adventure by answering these questions: Who owns this cargo? Who's delivering it? Who wants to stop this cargo from being delivered? Why do they want to stop it from being delivered? Answering these questions can restart a derailed adventure, or jumpstart a new adventure.

Always remember, you can choose an option rather than roll. The point of the charts is to help you be creative, not to box you in. If some result looks good to you, use it. Take a lesson from Master Qui-Gon: Know when to influence the dice. ☺

Table 1: Container

d%	Type of Container
00-10	None (piled on floor or palette)
11-25	Sacks or bundles
26-60	Duraplast crates
61-70	Durasteel drums
71-80	Sealed in shipping foam
81-90	Cage
91-95	Enclosed in carbonite
96-00	Roll again. On a second result of 96-00, the container is a Living Host*

Table 2: Contents

d%	Contents
01-05	Nothing
06-10	Food
11-15	Clothes
16-20	Fut, gelts or lides
21-25	Livestock/domesticated animals
26-30	Power cells
31-35	Medpads or flacta
36-40	Fuel
41-50	Datapads
51-60	Conlinks
61-65	Holocubes
66-69	Computer parts
70-73	Droid parts
74-77	Vehicle parts
78-83	Starship parts
84-85	Slaves
86-90	Chemicals (see Table 2-A: Chemicals)
91-94	Armor (see Table 2-B: Armor)
95-96	Wild creature (see Table 2-C: Creatures)
97-98	Weapons (see Table 2-D: Weapons)
99-00	Vehicle (see Table 2-E: Vehicles)

Table 2-A: Chemicals

d%	Type of Chemical
1	Inert
2	Flammable
3	Carcinogenic
4	Lubricant
5	Adhesive
6	Roll twice; ignore a result of 1 or 6

Table 2-B: Armor

d20	Type of Armor
1-12	Light armor
13-18	Medium armor
19	Heavy armor
20	Powered armor

Table 2-C: Creature

d20	Type of Creature
1-3	Dewback
4-6	Tauntaun
7-9	Kaadu
10	Rancor

Table 2-D: Weapons

d20	Type of Weapon
1-3	Killives
4-6	Combat gloves
7-8	Stun batons
9-10	Vibrodaggers
11	Vibroblades
12	Vibro-axes
13-15	Hold-out blasters
16-17	Blaster pistols
18	Blaster rifles
19	Heavy blasters
20	Grenades

Table 2-E: Vehicles

d10	Type of Vehicle
1-5	Landspeeder
6-8	Speeder bike
9	Air speeder
10	Skiff

Table 3: Secret

d10	The Deal
1	None
2	Stolen
3	Rare and valuable
4	Being watched
5	Part of a larger shipment
6	Mislabeled
7	Conceals a homing beacon (DC 30 Search check to locate)
8	Contaminated
9	Booby-trapped (DC 15 Search check to locate, DC 20 Disable Device check to defuse)
10	Hidden compartment (DC 20 Spot check to notice; roll again on Table 2 to identify the real cargo)

* A "living host" can entail a number of possibilities depending on the nature of the cargo. If the cargo is large, the "host" might be wearing it, carrying it, or escorting it. If the cargo is smaller, the host might have it implanted in his or her body. Think about how an individual person would transport objects and see where the idea takes you.

DECK PLANS

Tips, Tricks and Tactics for the Star Wars Customizable Card Game



The Shaft: Rebel Squadrons Riding the Ragged Wedge

BY CORY J. HERNDON

This month's nosedive down the Shaft features special guest star Wedge Antilles, Red Squadron Leader extraordinaire. The only Rebel pilot with two Death Star silhouettes painted on the side of his X-wing, Wedge probably has the most disproportionate fans-to-lines-in-the-movies ratio this side of Boba Fett.

A Minor Character for All Seasons

The leader of Rogue Squadron came fiercely into his own in the Death Star II expansion, a destiny-canceling dynamic with a slick new ship to match. In fact, anyone who's read any of the X-Wing books will recognize a lot of the ground-work characters for that series appearing in DSII (and not coincidentally, this deck). All of these characters can enter play in a snap thanks to the new Squadron Assignments effect. Objective? This deck needs no Objective.

While the backbone of "Squad & Deliver" are the bold supporting players of

the Rebellion, they do get a helpful assist from the main cast. The good General Calrissian hits the table quickly thanks to Strike Planning, while Squadron Assignments ensures he'll be in the cockpit of the rectenna-less Millennium Falcon—Gold Squadron 1—in no time. Alternately, you could use Squadron Assignments on GS1 and/or Nien Nunb, then use Strike Planning to grab the General and turn this new version of Han Solo's beloved freighter a YT-class juggernaut. You'll inadvertently find yourself playing out the "Lando dies" version of Return of the Jedi, and Captain Solo is ready to take back the controls with the original Millennium Falcon.

Planetary Defense

On the ground, the tried-and-true EPP Obi-Wan with Lightsaber provides quick offensive power, while the Skywalker twins provide longer-lasting ability at sites (both can also act as instant-death pilots if you get into a pinch). Captain Han and his pal Chewie of Kashyyyk aren't to be toyed

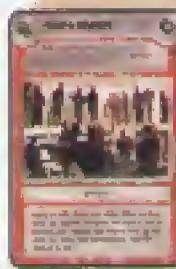
with either. If your opponent fields a space-light deck, your pilots won't be entirely useless. All are capable warriors, and Zev and Wedge make great co-pilots for Rogue 2, the only combat vehicle in the deck (remember, Wedge can cancel destiny with another Rogue pilot whether or not he's in space during the battle). Use the Docking Bay sites as a quick way to move your ground-based hit squad around the space line, and meanwhile the ships of "Rainbow Squadron" dominate the skies with support from a Mon Calamari Cruiser or two.

Should the bad guys attempt to play Death Star II, you're more than ready to blow it back to the Core, with a complement of Missiles and Torpedoes at your disposal. Get them out quickly with Rapid Fire, and should enemy ships get in your way, use Steady Aim to help ensure a direct hit.

All right, get to your ships—Imperial troops have entered the base. Repeat. Imperial Troops... ■



ON STRIKE: Strike Planning serves two primary functions in this deck: allowing General Calrissian to play as soon as possible, and denying your opponent 2 Force generation from your starting location, Endor.



FOR YOUR NEXT ASSIGNMENT... Squadron Assignments from Death Star II is a godsend to space-happy stick-jockeys everywhere.



THE NEXT MILLENIUM Why does Han get a feeling he's never going to see her again? Beats me. Pick a falcon, any falcon. Lose one, replace it with the other.

Rogue Tip

The new Wedge can cancel destiny as long as he's with a Rogue or Red Squadron pilot—and fortunately for Antilles, many of the Rebels' best pilots once flew with the Rogues, regardless of their designations at the Battle of Endor. "Squad & Deliver" offers no fewer than seven ex- and current Rogues to fly on Red Leader's wing. Here they are, from B to Z:



Keir Sartage:
Luke's childhood buddy is back from the dead, just in time to die valiantly in another run on another Death Star. His ship, Red 3, doesn't make it into this deck

due to an inefficient lack of an astromech, but the honcho mustache man makes a great co-pilot for...



Keir Sartage:
This little-known "Rogue Squadron veteran" hits the table in his ship—Red Squadron 7—for free. Don't leave him alone, though, unlike many of his col-

leagues, he adds no destiny (although he'll add 1 to the maneuver of fellow Red Squadron pilots).



Biggs Darklighter:
Though he definitely boasts one of the worst haircuts in the Star Wars universe, Colonel Salm's co-pilot is better than the Colonel himself in many ways. On any of

your starships, he'll add 2 to the destiny of any weapon draws (handy when you're trying to shoot down the Chimaera). On Gray Squadron 1 (or 2), he'll add top Force drains, lending your deck even more speed.



Derek 'Hobble' Kiiwan:
Biggs' other best buddy will add 2 power if the two are together, and Hobble also gets you a small one-power boost when your opponent sends a Star Destroyer after him. If you find yourself fighting a ground battle, Hobble's matching speeder from the Battle of Hoth—Rogue 4—will definitely come in handy.



Tycho Celchu:
A major character in the X-wing novels, Tycho—a Rogue Squadron pilot on loan to the A-wings of Green Squadron—serves this deck as a better-than-average pilot and an always-handy spy. He also adds a destiny when not able to do otherwise on his personal A-wing, Green Squadron 3, or any X-wing.



Karie Neth:
You know, the Rebellion may be led by a robed ex-Senator and a Princess without a homeworld, but for all that girl power on top, the rank-and-file pilots have been decidedly

testosterone-heavy. Miss Neth brings a little gender equity to the game (and Rogue Squadron) and serves as a back-up pilot for Gray Squadron 2.



Zev Senesca:
Brave, brave Zev: thought lost at the Battle of Hoth, he returns to the fray in his snowspeeder, Rogue 2. The sharp-eyed pilot that found Han and Luke lost in

the frozen wastes is just as useful in space, so apply as needed.

SQUAD & DELIVER

Starling (8)

- 1 Careful Planning
- 1 Endor (Starting Location)
- 1 Endor Landing Platform
- 1 Heading for the Medical Frigate
- 1 Squadron Assignments
- 1 Strike Planning

Characters (33)

- 1 Admiral Ackbar
- 1 Biggs Darklighter
- 1 Captain Han Solo
- 1 Captain Venner
- 1 Chewbacca of Kashyyyk
- 1 Colonel Salm
- 1 Daughter of Skywalker
- 1 Derek 'Hobble' Kiiwan
- 1 First Officer Thaneccal
- 1 General Calrissian
- 1 Green Leader
- 1 Karie Neth
- 1 Keir Sartage
- 1 Kip Klan
- 1 Lieutenant Jelsaj
- 1 Luke Skywalker, Jedi Knight
- 1 Nien Nunb
- 1 Obi-Wan with Lightsaber
- 1 Ten Numb
- 1 Tycho Celchu
- 1 Wedge Antilles, Red Squadron Leader
- 1 Zev Senesca

Locations (5)

- 1 Home One: War Room
- 1 Home One: Docking Bay
- 1 Mori Calamari
- 1 Sullust
- 1 Yavin IV

Interrupts (5)

- 1 Rapid Fire
- 1 Star Destroyer!
- 1 Slight Weapons Malfunction
- 1 Stay Sharp
- 1 Steady Aim

Weapons & Devices (8)

- 1 Anakin's Lightsaber
- 1 Enhanced Proton Torpedoes
- 1 Intruder Missile
- 1 Concussion Missiles
- 1 Luke's Lightsaber
- 1 SW-1 Ion Cannon
- 1 X-Wing Laser Cannon

Vehicles & Starships (14)

- 1 Blue Squadron 5
- 1 Deliance
- 1 Gold Squadron 1
- 1 Gray Squadron 1
- 1 Gray Squadron 2
- 1 Green Squadron 1
- 1 Green Squadron 3
- 1 Home One
- 1 Millennium Falcon
- 1 Red Squadron 1
- 1 Red Squadron 4
- 1 Red Squadron 7
- 1 Rogue 2
- 1 Rogue 4



Our Last Hope

What Know You of Ready?

BY MICHAEL MIKAELIAN

If there was ever any doubt that Luke was too impulsive to become a Jedi, the Endor expansion set from Decipher confirmed it. *Daughter Of Skywalker*, the Endor version of Leia, is an ideal candidate for Jedi training. With the release of Death Star II, the next best choice would be *Son Of Skywalker* (Cloud City). Thanks to this game text you can deploy Luke's Lightsaber (DSII) from your Reserve Deck, which adds one to each training destiny draw.

But why would you want to train Luke when Leia does the job just as well? Several reasons: Leia is one less Force to deploy, even though you must deploy her from your Reserve Deck to take advantage of the Objective; Leia provides an extra Light side Force icon; and Luke is usually more useful elsewhere than Leia. These have been the reasons that players have trained *Daughter Of Skywalker* in the ways of the Force since the release of Endor.

Training Method

Every training deck should have the following:

Dagobah (Dagobah)

A Jedi's Strength (Dagobah)

It Is The Future You See (Dagobah)

Great Warrior (Dagobah)

Dagobah: Bog Clearing

(or **Dagobah: Swamp**) (Dagobah)

Domain Of Evil (Dagobah)

Size Matters Not (Dagobah)

Dagobah: Jungle (Dagobah)

Great Warrior (Dagobah)

Dagobah: Training Area (Dagobah)

Yoda's Hope (Dagobah)

This is simply another +1 training destiny.

Mind What You Have Learned/Save You It Can (Special Edition)

This is the best way to take advantage of Jedi tests.

Any Apprentice (two copies)

Regardless of who is to be trained, you need two copies of that character. You only need one Yoda, because you typically only activate three Force on your first turn. This is important, because the odds of Yoda being one of the cards you activate are slim. By turn two, you're activating five or more Force. There's a good chance that a single copy of the apprentice could be one of those cards. Also, if you deploy *Daughter Of Skywalker* from your hand, you lose the benefits of the objective.

You Must Confront Vader (DSII)

The first five Jedi tests are necessary to flip *Mind What You Have Learned*. They each have a powerful effect too. Once all five are completed, you gain the following (in test number order): All opponent's Force drain bonuses are ignored; opponent must have total ability > 5 at a location to draw battle destiny; you may subtract one from each opponent's destiny draws; during your Control Phase you may use 2 Force to search your Reserve Deck for any card and put it in your hand; and you may re-use a predetermined destiny each time you would normally draw a destiny. These five abilities help you stay in the game long enough to flip and retrieve to Force. Then you can hinder the Dark Side with Jedi Test #6, *You Must Confront Vader*.

Dagobah: Yoda's Hut (Dagobah)

Though the system is required, the sites you choose are up to you. Note that you technically only need the *Bog Clearing* (or *Swamp*) and the *Jungle* for your Jedi tests. You definitely want the *Training Area* since it allows you get your Jedi tests out of your deck. *Yoda's Hut* is ideal for Force generation and reducing attrition by 2 once a turn.

If your destinies are low, you may want to consider using both the *Bog Clearing* and the *Swamp*.

Yoda (Dagobah)

Yoda is without doubt the best character to train with. He provides a +1 to all training destinies (+2 with Yoda's Hope), adds one to your total Force generation, and allows you to use Yoda's Hut's game text to reduce attrition by 2.

Wise Advice (SE)

This Effect is useful for three reasons: +1 training destiny; Sense and Alter (both Premiere) protection; and free Immediate Effects.

The Way Of Things (DSII)

This Effect can be a monumental time saver. (See diagram on the next page.)

Adventure! Excitement!

The remainder of your deck—more than 40 cards—is your tool for winning the game. I like to use starships as my main method of winning. The Light side has such powerful starships and good drains in space that it makes sense. Avoiding sites can leave you vulnerable to cards like *Search And Destroy* (Endor), but also protects you from all kinds of combat vehicles, character weapons, and extra battle destinies. Between Jedi Test #1 and *Projection Of A Skywalker* (JP), there are few sites the Dark Side can effectively drain you at.

There are many different combinations of cards that could yield a winning deck. Instead of unique starfighters, you can use space cruisers. If you want to try and take over sites you could use scouts on Endor or a variety of characters on Cloud City. Another solution could be to make a more traditional Mains and Toys deck. This requires multiple copies of rare cards, but the effects can be devastating.

Five Tests in Seven Turns



1 LIGHT SIDE TURN ONE

Activate at least 3 Force. Search your deck for a Dagobah site. The Training Area is your first choice. Then deploy Yoda (using 3 Force) and Yoda's Hope to the site. Also, search your deck for Jedi Test #1 using the Training Area's game text.



Your Hand



DARK SIDE TURN TWO

Search your deck for Jedi Test #2.

Draw on Dark Side Turn



Your Hand



2 LIGHT SIDE TURN TWO

Search your deck for Jedi Test #3. Activate at least 5 Force. Search your deck for a Dagobah site. Yoda's Hut is your first choice, but if it's not available, get the Jungle. Then, deploy Daughter Of Skywalker (4 Force) to Dagobah at Yoda's Site. Also, deploy Jedi Test #1 to that site.



DARK SIDE TURN THREE

Search your deck for Jedi Test #4.

Draw on Dark Side Turn



3 LIGHT SIDE TURN THREE

Search your deck for Jedi Test #5. Activate at least 9 Force. Attempt Jedi Test #1 (you'll need to draw at least a 3 destiny). Search

your deck for a Dagobah site. If you haven't gotten the Jungle yet, do so. If you have, then get Yoda's Hut. You'll want to deploy the Swamp last.) If you completed Jedi Test #1, deploy Jedi Test #2 on the Jungle, move Daughter Of Skywalker to that site (if your opponent hasn't moved it), then move Yoda to Yoda's Hut.

Your Hand



4 LIGHT SIDE TURN FOUR

Search your deck for Jedi Test #6. Activate at least 9 Force. Attempt Jedi Test #2 (you'll need to draw at least a 3 destiny).



Your Hand



Search your deck for a Dagobah site. By now, the Swamp should be the only one left in your deck. Deploy between the Training Area and Yoda's Hut. If you completed Jedi Test #2, deploy Jedi Test #3 on the Jungle. If Daughter Of Skywalker is at the Jungle

during your deploy phase, Jedi Test #3 is complete. Deploy Jedi Test #4 on the Swamp, then move Daughter Of Skywalker to the Swamp.



5 LIGHT SIDE TURN FIVE

Activate at least 10 Force. Attempt Jedi Test #4 (you'll need to draw at least a 4 destiny). If Daughter Of Skywalker completed Jedi Test #4, deploy Jedi Test #5 on Yoda's Hut. Move Daughter Of Skywalker to Yoda's Hut.

6 LIGHT SIDE TURN SIX

At this point, you're almost in the home stretch. All you have to do is make sure that there's a decent destiny lined up by turn seven. At the beginning of your turn, Daughter Of Skywalker will begin to attempt Jedi Test #5 by turning upside-down.

7 LIGHT SIDE TURN SEVEN

At the end of your turn, Daughter Of Skywalker turns right side up. It's important to remember that your used pile is recirculated before the end of your turn. That means that you can activate all your Force (or all but 1 Force), and either use Fall Of The Legend, Throw Me Another Charge, A Few Maneuvers, or The Signal to set up a high destiny. If that's not possible, you can use Traffic Control to place either a Projection Of A Skywalker, X-Wing Laser Cannon, or I'll Take The Leader on top of your used pile. That's an easy high destiny for Jedi Test #5. Just remember to save 10 Force for Secret Plans and to occupy two battlegrounds for Come Here You Big Coward. ☺



STAR WARS SUPERBOMBAD RACING™

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96	Starblitz	PS2

BY HADEN BLACKMAN

Anakin has a Big Head:

So will you when you play Lucas Learning's *Super Bombad Racing*

Sleep inside Lucas Learning, a group of kids are giggling madly. Their laughter echoes through the halls, and one only need follow their voices to find them huddled around a television playing Super Bombad Racing. The laughter is certainly a good sign for Lucas Learning, as Super Bombad Racing represents two important "firsts" for the company: it will be Lucas Learning's first console title (releasing on PlayStation 2 and Dreamcast) and its first pure entertainment title.

With a PlayStation 2 release scheduled in early 2001, Super Bombad Racing is a "kart racer" that allows players to race familiar Star Wars characters—each in a signature vehicle—through Star Wars-inspired courses. The game promises to combine the manic, almost comical style of kart racing games with the power of the Star Wars license. To get the real skinny on the project, *Star Wars Gamer* infiltrated Lucas Learning and tracked down Project Leader Michael McCormick (Gungan Frontier).

Super-Deformed Star Wars

We find McCormick in his office, surrounded by concept art from Super Bombad Racing. When asked to describe the game in one sentence, he voices what we're thinking: "It's *Star Wars* like you've

never seen *Star Wars* before." The concept art that plasters McCormick's walls is testament to this: the game features incredibly stylized versions of popular Episode I characters. The first thing we notice are their huge noggin's.

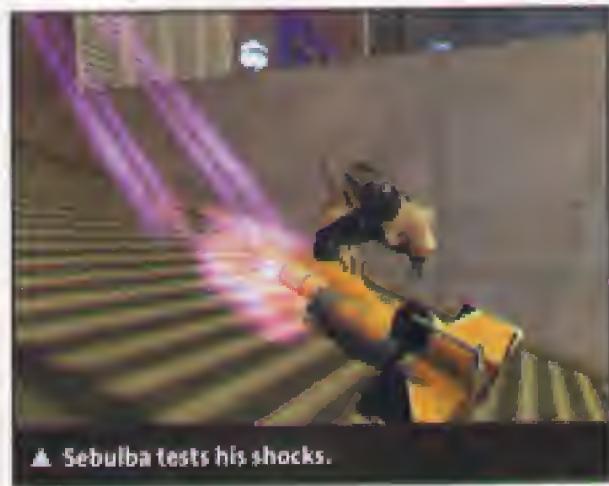
McCormick characterizes the game's art style as a "super-deformed, anime look" based on sketches by team concept artist Francis Hsu. When Hsu first presented the sketches, McCormick admits that Lucas Learning's senior management was initially "taken aback" by the direction. McCormick was also concerned about Lucas Licensing's reaction to the super-deformed Star Wars characters. "We really weren't sure which way they would go," he says. "Fortunately, they were quite pleased and excited about the concept sketches."

With the concept art approved, McCormick and his team solidified their design philosophy. "Basically, we're having a little more fun with *Star Wars*," he explains. "We're pushing the direction so that it's a little more playful. We're really playing up each character's personality, and almost walking the line of parody." Giggles can be heard from the next room,

The Green Goo Gambit

So what are the kids laughing about? "Maybe the gadgets?" McCormick suggests. As racers zoom around the tracks, they have the opportunity to grab special gadgets that help secure victory. "Overall, there are twenty-five gadgets," McCormick reveals. "One gadget sends out a homing droid that bounces into other racers. There's also a photon burst, and a ray that causes other racers to spin out of control. And goo." The "goo" is actually green slime that a player can drop onto the track. The goo blobs encase opponents, causing them to bounce around wildly.

Along with goo and other frontal or rear attacks, gadgets may provide speed



▲ Sebulba tests his shocks.

boosts and shields. Finally, agile players will be able to collect a special "power gadget" that activates each racer's unique move. "Once you have the power gadget, Darth Maul can throw his lightsaber," McCormick says. "Jar Jar's tongue shoots out of his head and can be used to grab another racer and slingshot it back. And the Queen's starship reflects a blinding light." Most of these special moves only affect one targeted racer, but Jedi Master Yoda has dominion over the entire track. "He waves his girner stick and all the racers invert," McCormick says.

The gadgets add a level of strategy to the game, which was important to the designers. McCormick sums up the team's philosophy: "Our goal was to make a game that a kid could pick up and just play, enjoying the spirit and the art style. But then, we also wanted deeper game-play elements, which come to the surface over time. So, we have the gadgets and special powers, which you want to use at the right time. You can also unlock secrets, including several hidden racers."

Maneuvering around the tracks isn't standard fare either, as Super Bombad Racing includes a vertical element that can't be found in most other kart racers. "In other racing games, you're always stuck on the ground," McCormick says. "In Super Bombad Racing, the vehicles actually hover. The racers can climb walls and a jump is really a jump—you move vertically several racer heights." Jumping allows racers to clear obstacles and move past opponents, but it also has more visceral applications. A gleam appears in McCormick's eyes as he reveals one of the game's sneakiest attacks: "You can actually land on other racers and squish them."

Darth Maul's Soft Side

The gadgets are compelling, but the kids also seem to enjoy just being the racers. "Part of the appeal is the art style," McCormick theorizes. "Anime is a hot look, and it's fun. People see the characters and laugh—they want to play them. Quasi-cuddly Darth Maul is just funny and appealing."

The game features eight distinctive racers (as well as unlockable characters).

Competitors include: Anakin and Sebulba in their individual Podracers; Jar Jar driving a bongo; Queen Amidala in her chromium-covered starship; Darth Maul atop the menacing Sith speeder; Obi-Wan Kenobi in the crimson Republic cruiser; and Boss Nass using a transport originally designed for Gungan frontier. Yoda's "vehicle" is perhaps the most inventive: he pilots his Jedi council chair, which has been equipped with turbo-jet engines. "He souped it up a bit," McCormick grins.

The eight vehicles have their own characteristics. "The idea is that you can win with any racer, but you need to know their pros and cons. Boss Nass is big and solid—really fun for bumping other racers off the track," McCormick advises.



▲ Cave crawling, Bombad style.

Big Head Racing

Just like the racers themselves, each of the nine race courses has its own distinctive feel. The courses are based on the major environments of Episode I: the Naboo Swamps, Otoh Gunga, Theed, Mos Espa, the Dune Sea, the Boonta Eve course, the Theed power generator complex, and the Droid Control Ship. Each course has individualized features, as well as a "champion racer."

"From an AI perspective, we're ensuring that the champions know their tracks the best," says McCormick. "They'll usually perform better than the other computer-controlled racers because they know the lay of the land. Watching those racers can help you improve your time." The team used the films as inspiration when pairing champion racers with their respective tracks. McCormick explains: "Jar Jar does

best in the swamps because that's where we first meet him in the film; Otoh Gunga is Boss Nass's city, so of course, he's the champion there."

Several boys in the next room shout "Battle Arena!" in a chorus. McCormick takes the opportunity to explain that, along with the standard racetracks, Super Bombad Racing features four Battle Arenas that allow for head-to-head chaos. Again, these arenas have unique elements that increase the fun factor. "The Naboo battlefield has fambaa with shield generators," say McCormick. "We also have a Jedi Monument. And the Pit of Carkoon is really fun—it's basically a big, sandy bowl with the Sarlacc in the middle. You can spend hours knocking your friends into it."

Although three of the Battle Arenas are based on Episode I, the fourth is a homage to *The Empire Strikes Back*. "It's the Hoth asteroid belt," McCormick informs us. "We even have the space slug hidden in the nether reaches of that level."

Although the Battle Arenas allow players to combat one another, McCormick stresses that the game is not about straight fighting. "It's really more about competition," he argues. "One to four players can compete in the races, and players can also save their best times to challenge other players." In addition, the game can teach cooperation: in the Battle Arena mode, players can join forces in collaborative, two-person teams.

During a lull in the conversation, we begin to hear some of the game's original music. McCormick describes the music style as "super-deformed Star Wars music." Composer Peter McConnell, who has worked on numerous Star Wars titles and is very familiar with the classic John Williams scores, wanted to infuse the game's music with a cartoon feel. Separate pieces of music were composed and recorded for each track and arena, the main menu, and the credits.



Shifting Gears

Despite its decidedly entertainment direction, Super Bombad Racing actually began development as an educational title. McCormick explains that the original design called for "a PC adventure game of sweeping size and scope, with a small racing component." According to McCormick, the player took on the role of Anakin Skywalker shortly before the events of Episode I. In a quest to save his friends, Anakin "roamed around Tatooine and gathered parts to build racing vehicles."

Early in development, however, the team switched platforms from PC to the PlayStation 2 and reevaluated the design. "We looked at our schedule and budget and compared that to what we were biting off," says McCormick. "We were already developing for a new platform, and the racing portion was becoming more complex. We knew that just limiting the product to a racing game would keep us busy enough."

And the team has been busy. With the early 2001 release date looming, McCormick and his crew of twenty are crunching to complete the PlayStation 2 version of the game. They've been hard at work for over eighteen months, and McCormick is pleased with their progress. "The game has been playable for quite a while. We've overcome a lot of hurdles—art pipeline issues, clipping problems—and now we're just adding more animations, touching up the artwork, and optimizing." After the PlayStation 2 release, the team will stick around to complete three ports of the game for the Dreamcast, Mac, and PC.

The kids outside clearly don't care what platform the game is being developed for—all they know is that the game makes them laugh. Before we go to try our hands at beating a group of eight-year olds,

McCormick offers a last bit of advice to fans: "Just think about this game as a fantasy within a fantasy. It's what the characters do on their off hours. You have Yoda racing Darth Maul, and Jar Jar catching racers with his tongue. It's just the lighter side of Star Wars."



▲ Master Yoda in his souped up... chair.

STAR WARS EPISODE I JEDI POWER BATTLES

Jedi Council Relocates!

Jedi Power Battles makes the move to Dreamcast



Ki-Adi-Mundi is a pretty lucky Cerean. Although he's the first Knight to sit on the Jedi Council, Ki-Adi-Mundi has a speaking role in Episode I, a keen purple lightsaber, his own action figure, and two comic book series. Now he's featured in a LucasArts video game to boot. Ki-Adi-Mundi joins Mace Windu, Adi Gallia, Plo Koon, Qui-Gon Jinn, and Obi-Wan Kenobi in the Sega DreamCast version of the popular Jedi Power Battles, originally developed by LucasArts Entertainment.

for the Sony PlayStation.

In order to learn more about the process of creating this new version of Jedi Power Battles (and uncover why Ki-Adi-Mundi didn't make the cut the first time around), *Star Wars Gamer* cornered Project Leader Robert Blackadder and Production Manager Reeve Thompson. Along with Project Leader Kevin Boyle, Blackadder and Thompson worked on both incarnations of the game.



▲ Jedi Power Battles on Dreamcast features Mace Windu head-shine.

Star Wars Gamer: First, can you start by describing the challenges of converting a game originally created for the PlayStation to the Dreamcast?

Robert Blackadder: Doing a conversion is always a challenge, but moving to a more powerful system does make for an easier job. The Dreamcast has more memory and a faster graphics processor [than the

PlayStation], so our main challenge was a total redo of all the art in the game to really take advantage of the Dreamcast's power. We raised the number of polygons in all the game models and levels, and increased the texture and color resolution, going from 4bit colors to 16bit!

SWG: What else made the port a challenge?

Reeve Thompson: It was challenging to shift gears. We had focused for so long around the PlayStation and built everything with the PlayStation's features and power in mind. It's tough to get out of that mindset and move to a new console. But technically we didn't have too many problems. Our code was pretty solid on the original version, and that made it very easy to adapt.

SWG: Did you discover any limitations on the Dreamcast that you didn't encounter with the PlayStation?

Rob: We lost a few controller buttons when we moved to Dreamcast, but in the long run I think it made the game better by forcing us to simplify our control scheme.

Reeve: Other than that, we didn't really lose anything. Sega really knew where the bar was and knew that they needed to surpass it. This is a "next generation" system, and they tend to be leaps and bounds ahead of the consoles from the last round.

SWG: How big was the core team?

Reeve: The Dreamcast team had about fifteen people. It was definitely a smaller team than the group who built the PlayStation version, but you know, that was a relatively small team too. I'm constantly amazed at the work these people are able to produce.

you beat them all.

To give even more replay value to the game, we also added a versus mode so gamers can fight head-to-head with their friends. As you defeat levels, you'll unlock more and more opponents in versus mode. The last big addition would be the cheats. We added a few cheats accessible through the gamepad, but the "monster cheats" are only activated from the Dreamcast keyboard when plugged into port 3. To open the cheat window, hit the tilde (~) key, then type "rbpcchesf3". Players will have to find the rest of the cheats on their own, but they can start the search by typing "help."

Reeve: There was also one boss monster in particular that we simply couldn't include in the PlayStation version due to time constraints. That boss is back in this version though.

SWG: Can you describe some of Ki-Adi-Mundi's special moves and Force powers?

Rob: Ki-Adi-Mundi has some of the mental Force powers, like "mesmerize" [daze and confuse your enemies!] and "cloak" [creep around while invisible!]. But he also has some butt-kicking Force blasts. As for combo moves, many on the team feel Ki-Adi-Mundi has the most powerful lightsaber attacks in the game.

SWG: Why didn't Ki-Adi-Mundi make it into the initial version of the game?

Reeve: Early on in the PlayStation development, we made a very important decision: rather than have a huge group of playable characters, we decided to focus our efforts on a handful of memorable Jedi so that each character we did include would be unique and fun to play. We wanted to give all of them signature moves and spend the time necessary to make each move look as cool as possible. We also wanted each Jedi to have different capabilities, including different strengths, weaknesses, and Force powers. At the same time, they all needed to be relatively balanced. Because it takes quite a long time to really develop and balance a solid character, we always knew that we wouldn't be able to include all of the characters that we wanted.



▲ Force powers—don't leave Coruscant without 'em.

SWG: From a design standpoint, what has changed?

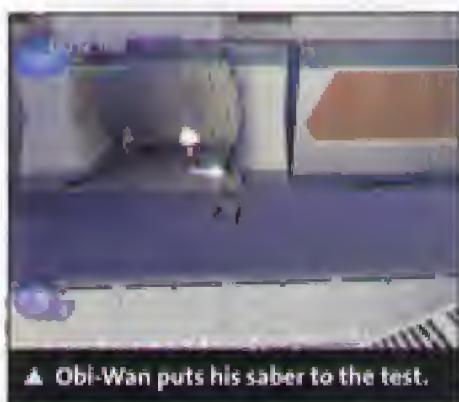
Reeve: Mainly we adjusted some of the gameplay brought over from the PlayStation version to make the game more balanced.

Rob: We did this by revisiting areas that gave gamers problems in the PlayStation version. We redid some of the least popular bosses and changed some of the jumps that were too difficult. At the same time, I also had the level designers increase the bad guy count wherever possible. The Jedi Power Battles engine can handle a ton of battle throids and I wanted to take advantage of that.

Reeve: And we adjusted the placement of some power-ups, which is simply part of the benefit of having more time to adjust and tune the game.

SWG: What other new elements have you added?

Rob: We have some important training levels in this version. To beat Jedi Power Battles you must be able to block [with your lightsaber] and jump. Our level designers June Park and Derek Flippo created a series of levels to build the players' skills in these areas. We tied these into the main game by allowing you to unlock Ki-Adi-Mundi when

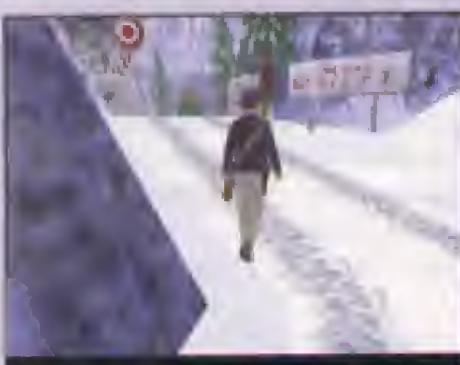


▲ Obi-Wan puts his saber to the test.

A Port in the Storm

In game development terms, a "port" is any game that has been converted from its original gaming system (or "platform") to run on another system. A game developed for the PC, such as *Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine* can be converted into a game that can be played on a home console, such as the Nintendo 64.

Depending on the size of the game, the limitations and strengths of the new platform, and the complexity of the initial programming code, creating a solid port can be difficult. First, the game's creators must consider whether fundamental design changes are necessary to make the game successful on the new platform. Such changes might alter the control scheme. This is especially true if the game is moving from the PC, which relies heavily on a mouse and keyboard, to a console machine, which utilizes a handheld control pad. The designers might also alter the game's pace, play style, difficulty, and even storyline to appeal to the users of the new platform.



▲ It's a long walk to the next platform.

Because all platforms are very different, most ports also require a substantial programming effort. Programmers may need to rewrite huge chunks of the original game's code for the new platform. Artists often step in as well to recreate graphics. Then the game must be tested again to make certain that new bugs haven't been created during the conversion process.

Although ports are sometimes challenging, conversions can be beneficial. Because the conversion team isn't starting from scratch, ports are often completed quicker and for less money than the original title. More important, however, is the fact that ports allow popular games to reach a wider audience. They generate revenue for game companies, introduce new fans to developers, and provide users of every platform with plenty of gaming options.

Rob: Time and resources regrettably come into the equation when designing a game. Fortunately, by the time we had to decide to cut Ki-Adi-Mundi from the PlayStation version, we already knew that we would probably be doing a port. We decided to save him for the Dreamcast. By holding him back we had more time to give him cool animations of his own.

SWG: Other than showcasing Ki-Adi-Mundi, what was the rationale behind doing the Dreamcast port?

Reeve: When the Dreamcast was first released, the original team was very excited by its capabilities. They felt that *Jedi Power Battles* would suit this particular console, and they were right—it translated extremely well. Also, doing the port just made a great deal of sense from a financial standpoint. We knew that we could create the port in a relatively short timeframe, with a relatively small team, and that there would be a large market for a *Star Wars* Dreamcast title. But it was really the team's understanding that *Jedi Power Battles* would make a great Dreamcast product that pushed this version of the game.

Rob: We really wanted to put *Jedi Power Battles* onto one of the next generation consoles and the Dreamcast fit nicely into our schedule.

SWG: As someone who has played the game for hours on end, do you have any hints for players trying to beat *Jedi Power Battles* on the Dreamcast?

Rob: The keys to both versions of *Jedi Power Battles* are blocking and patience. If you can learn to reflect blaster shots effectively and use your special powers and moves at the right times, you can take out the baddies. But I won't say it's easy. Being a Jedi is hard work!

Reeve: If you're having trouble, play the training levels. That's an advantage that the Dreamcast players have over the PlayStation users. Everything you need to know to complete the game can be learned and practiced in these training levels.

Rob: Yeah, master the jumping training levels. If you can beat them easily you can handle any jump in the game.

Reeve: And use the Force, of course.



▲ Battle droids challenge Adi Gallia in the swamps of Naboo.



▲ Plo Koon contemplates life.

STAR WARS DEMOLITION

Tips & Tactics

Crush your opponents with these helpful hints for the PlayStation & Dreamcast versions of Demolition!

» Know your vehicle! Spend some time learning each vehicle's strengths and weaknesses. The rancor might be slow, but his special grab attack is fearsome.

» Power Up! Take the time to use the charge weapon and charge laser buttons. Boosting your special weapon or standard-issue laser cannon ensures maximum damage. Charging the laser cannon to Stage 4 activates each character's special attack.

» Experiment with the special weapons! Discover when they work well and when they're just hood ornaments. Concussion missiles, for example are powerful because they can track your opponent, but they're slow and can be outmaneuvered by fast and agile opponents.

» Don't underestimate the tractor beam! In the right hands, the tractor beam can be the most powerful special weapon in the game. It allows you to hold your enemy fast while you pound away with your primary laser cannon. And the super-charged tractor beam attack damages all vehicles within a small radius—a perfect ploy when you're surrounded.

» Recharge! When you've bashed up or low on juice, find the shield or weapon power generators located on every level. Suck up all the energy in these refilling stations before your opponents have a chance to use them.

» Use the terrain! Each level has key sites, such as the power generators, that can be used to your advantage. Stake out the power generators and attack wounded foes as they attempt to recharge. You can also keep your sights on the teleporters, unleashing salvos on unsuspecting vehicles as they exit. In the Dune Sea, push your opponents toward the Sarlacc or the treads of the sandcrawler. If your vehicle is at full strength, you might try taking on weaker opponents in the superlaser dish on the second Death Star.

» Focus! It's generally easier to take on one opponent at a time, putting all of your effort and energy into destroying each enemy in turn. Start with the foe you think will give you the most trouble—you don't want to face Boba Fett at the end of a level when your shields are weak and the shield power generator has been drained.

» Circle your prey! When using the faster vehicles, including Boba Fett and Auroa Sing, fly rings around your target while taking as many potshots as possible. Once you've weakened your prey, strike to demolish using a special weapon or super-charged attack.

» Play chicken! If your chosen vehicle has moderate to heavy armor, don't be afraid to ram smaller opponents repeatedly. The AT-AT, landspeeder, AT-ST, and the rancor can all be used as weapons themselves. Just keep an eye on your Shield Power and Vehicle Armor indicators.

Cheat Codes

Impress your friends and neighbors with these cheat codes for Star Wars Demolition.

To enter codes, go to the "Options" menu and choose "Preferences." While on the Preferences screen, simultaneously press R1 and L1 (or R Trigger and L Trigger on the Dreamcast). This will bring up a "PASSCODE" entry option. Use the directional buttons on the keypad to enter any of the following codes. Press "X" to activate the code on PlayStation; press "A" to activate the code on Dreamcast.

SLOW_MO_ON: Game runs at half speed, giving you more time enjoy the sights and react to enemy attacks.

BFM_FEELIT: Increases the mass of player-controlled vehicles. Increase to ramming speed....

LG_GRAV_ON: Changes the laws of physics—the effects of gravity are now reduced.

FIRERATEUP: Removes delays on weapon firing. Demolish your enemies more quickly than ever.

THROTTLEUP: Reduces air resistance around the player vehicle, increasing speed. Won't Auroa Sing be surprised when you catch up to her in your new-and-improved hot rod rancor?

RAISE_THEME: Become invincible. Who's laughing now, Fett?

Reveal the Sith Lord!

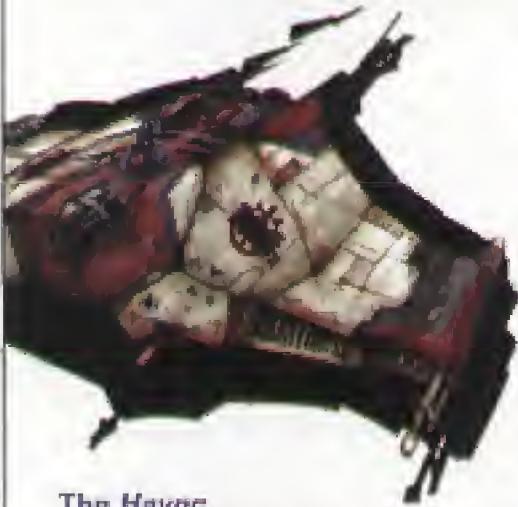
Be the first kid on your street to unlock Darth Maul in Demolition! Complete the game with all ten standard characters, in tournament mode, with over 10,000 credits to unlock Darth Maul on his Sith infiltrator, Lobot in a cloud car, and Boussis (Princess Leia) aboard a speeder bike. Once unlocked, all three vehicles can be used in any of the game's modes.

STAR WARS STARFIGHTERS

Starfighter Aces

RPG stats for the Starfighter game

LucasArts' upcoming Starfighter, an action-oriented flight combat game for the PlayStation 2, features a strong story that follows the adventures of three very different heroes. Now, *Star Wars Gamer* gives you the opportunity to add these characters and their vehicles to your *Star Wars* RPG campaign!



The Havoc

(Stats for Nym can be found in *Star Wars Gamer* #1)

Craft:	Modified Prototype Nubian Bomber
Class:	Starfighter (Bomber)
Cost:	Net resale
Size:	Small bomber
Crew:	Unique (pilot, gunner, navigator)
Passengers:	3
Cargo Capacity:	10 metric tons
Consumables:	2 weeks
Hyperdrive:	x1 iso
Max Speed:	Attack
Defense:	+1 size, +0 armor
Shield Points:	50
Hull Points:	140
DR:	5

Weapons:	Laser cannons & fire-linked*
Fire arc:	Front
Attack Bonus:	+5 +1 size, +4 fire control
Damage:	5d10 x3 each group
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a
Weapons:	Rotating laser turret
Fire arc:	Turret
Attack Bonus:	+7 +1 size, +6 fire control
Damage:	6d10
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a
Weapons:	Bomb chute & bombs**
Fire arc:	Ventral
Attack Bonus:	+3 +1 size, +3 fire control
Damage:	8d10 x10
Range modifiers:	PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a

*The Havoc has six separate forward-facing laser cannons, but Nym has fire-linked them into two groups of three (one on the right wing, one on the left). Using both turrets requires two separate attack rolls.

**The Havoc has a "bomblet generator," which can draw from the vehicle's primary power generator to create explosive spheres. The generator requires ten rounds to create a bomb and can never carry more than ten bombs at any given time. The chute can release up to all ten bombs simultaneously.

** Bombs are released from the bottom of the starfighter and fall onto targets below the craft.



▲ The Havoc's fire-linked laser cannons make short work of opposing starfighters.

fied the vehicle, adding more weapons and a more powerful Class 1.5 hyperdrive. Now, the Havoc is truly one-of-a-kind. The Havoc boasts six laser cannons, a rotating dorsal turret, and two bomb chutes. Although originally designed to deploy proton bombs, the Havoc now carries experimental "bomblet generators" that produce spheres of destructive energy.

Vana Sage

A mercenary's life is fraught with danger and excitement, the two things Vana Sage was looking for when she left placid Alderaan at fifteen. By twenty, she had mastered the *Maw*, earned the respect of Borocho the Hutt, and worked side by side with infamous bounty hunters. Vana's adventures were many, but she always seemed strapped for credits.

When King Veruna of Naboo offered her a place as his personal bodyguard and pilot, Vana accepted the lucrative assignment. In the short time she spent on the world, Vana grew to love Naboo, perhaps because it reminded her of home. But she soon came to believe that Naboo's citizens were naive and sheltered. Vana urged the King and the Royal Advisory Council to upgrade and expand Naboo's military. When they ignored her advice, she left the planet in disgust. Wandering the Outer Rim, she became a freelance operative working for the highest bidder. However, even while traveling to the far reaches of the galaxy, Vana continues to keep a watchful eye over her adopted home-world.

Vana Sage, Female Human Scn 6; Init +2 (Dex); Defense +9 (+7 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 32/13; Atk +4 melee (1d4, knife), +6 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); 5Q illicit barter, better lucky than good, sneak attack +2d6; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +2; SZ M; FP 3; Rep 3; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 16.

Equipment: Personal starship (Guardian Mantis), blaster pistol, knife, comlink, tool kit, survival kit, medpac.

Skills: Astrogate +13, Bluff +12, Computer Use +11, Disable Device +11, Gather Info +12, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Pilot +16, Repair +11, Search +11, Spot +9.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Pilot), Spacer, Starship Dodge, Starship Operation (starfighters), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, simple weapons, vehicle weapons).



▲ Despite its oddly-shaped fuselage, the *Guardian Mantis* is exceedingly fast.

Vana's *Guardian Mantis*

When Vana Sage set off on her career as a mercenary, she knew that she would need a special starfighter with remarkable capabilities. She envisioned a craft that was both fast and deadly, able to strike without warning and quickly stagger enemies. To create this ideal starfighter, Vana contracted a rogue Xi Char engineer. With the Xi Char's help, Vana designed her "stealth starfighter," the *Guardian Mantis*. Small, agile, and exceedingly fast, the *Mantis* lives up to Vana's expectations.

Even at first glance, the *Guardian Mantis* has an unusual design. It has two top-mounted wings, and a third ventral wing. During long-distance spaceflights or when landing the *Mantis*'s top wings fold backward, while the bottom wing retracts. Like

many other starfighters, the *Mantis* relies on an astromech droid for in-flight repairs and adjustments. However, Vana's R2 unit has been heavily modified and is now hardwired into the starfighter; "Mod-3," as Vana calls her droid, can never be removed from the *Mantis*, but his connection to the starship's inner working increases its overall efficiency.

The *Guardian Mantis* is armed with two standard laser cannons and a proton torpedo launcher.



▲ Vana still has a soft spot for Naboo.

Rather than loading her starfighter with standard torpedoes, Vana favors a smaller, but far more accurate version known as the nano missile. Vana also relies heavily on ion-enabled sensor tags. These magnetic tags attach to a successfully targeted enemy craft and begin draining its shields and power supplies. The tag also scans the vehicle to provide valuable information regarding the craft's weapons and defenses. If undetected, an attached sensor tag allows Vana to track the "tagged" vehicle across the galaxy. During particularly dangerous missions, Vana upgrades the sensor tags by installing an Ion Encumbrance System (IES). With the IES system at full power, a charged sensor tag can completely disable a standard starfighter.



The *Guardian Mantis*

Craft	Modified Prototype Nubian Bomber
Class	Starfighter (Bomber)
Costs	Not for sale
Size	Small (m-long)
Crews	Unique (1 pilot, 1 gunner, 1 navigator)
Passengers	3
Cargo Capacity	10 metric tons
Consumables	2 weeks
Hyperdrive	Ictine
Max Speed	Attack
Defense	21 (+size, no armor)
Shield Points	50
Hull Points	140
DR	5

*Vana's shield recharges at double the normal rate (6 points per minute), thanks to Mod-3's help.

Whenever Vana successfully targets an starship with the IES, the magnetic tag automatically attaches and remains affixed until physically removed. The ion effects (-2 penalty to all checks) do not fade after two rounds, but remain active until the tag is physically removed (Disable Device [DC 10]). The effects of multiple tags are cumulative. Thrown tags also allow Vana to track the tagged starship with a successful Computer Use check (DC 10).

Rhys Dallows

Rhys was born on Naboo, the son of a freighter captain and a teacher. He spent most of his youth on the outskirts of Theed, learning to pilot air-speeders and personal transports. He always planned to follow in his father's footsteps and become a commercial pilot, until his dad vanished.



▲ Rhys takes his N-1 in for another run.

during a routine supply run. Rhys couldn't give up flying but decided that if he was going to put his life in danger anyway, he might as well do it for a good cause. He immediately volunteered for the RSF and scored extremely well in his piloting tests. Shortly before the Battle of Naboo, the rookie pilot was accepted into Echo Flight, the Naboo Space Fighter Corps' training division.



▲ A troubled Rhys contemplates the new, highly dangerous circumstances he must fly through.



▲ Vana Sage in her *Guardian Mantis* targets a convoy with another strafing run.

RHYS DALLOWS, Male Human Sol 3: Init +3 [Dex]; Defense 6 (+3 class, +3 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 27/12; Atk +3 melee (1d3+1, punch), +5 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; SZ M; EP 4; Rep 1; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10. Equipment: Medpac, electrobinoculars, comlink, blaster pistol, survival kit, tool kit, RSF uniform.

Skills: Astrogation +6, Computer Use +6, Pilot +9, Repair +6. Feats: Ambidexterity, Armor Group Proficiencies (light, medium, heavy), Starship Dodge, Starship Operation (starfighters). Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vehicle weapons, vibro weapons).

Rhys pilots a standard N-1 starfighter, equipped with an astromech droid nicknamed Wrench.

STAR WARS

Galaxies Update

The last few months of 2000 was an extremely busy time for the team creating *Star Wars Galaxies*, the first ever *Star Wars* massively-multiplayer online game. A joint project between Verant Interactive and LucasArts Entertainment, the launch title for the *Star Wars Galaxies* series is set for release in spring of 2002. As 2001 loomed, the team made several important strides. First, in November, LucasArts announced the series' official title. The following day, the official web site (www.starwarsgalaxies.com) went live. The site includes letters from the team and a constantly-evolving Frequently Asked Questions, in which the team revealed (among other things):

- » The game will be set during the height of the Galactic Civil War
- » Jedi will play a role in the game
- » Players can select characters from several species, including Wookies

The web site also hosts message boards, where fans can ask questions of the developers. Among the hot topics in the first few weeks whether or not the game will allow Player versus Player (PvP) combat, how character death will be handled, and requests for more details about the Jedi system.



▲ First Look! Concept art for a Rodian, one of the player character species in *Star Wars Galaxies*